



All-new, full-color Graphic Novel



Geronimo Stilton

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL OF MARCO POLO



PAPERCUT 

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FOLLOWING THE TRAIL OF MARCO POLO

By Geronimo Stilton



FOLLOWING THE TRAIL OF MARCO POLO

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Text by Geronimo Stilton

Editorial coordination by Patrizia Puricelli

Original editing by Daniela Finistauri

Script by Demetrio Bargellini

Based on an original idea by Elisabetta Dami

Artistic coordination by Roberta Bianchi

Artistic assistance by Tommaso Valsecchi

Graphic Project by Michela Battaglin

Graphics by Marta Lorini

Cover art and color by Flavio Ferron

Interior illustrations by Giuseppe Facciotto and color by Davide Turotti

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FOR INFORMATION PLEASE ADDRESS ATLANTYCA S.p.A.

Via Leopardi 8 20123 Milan Italy tel. 0039 02 43001025 – fax 0039 02 43001020

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Michael Petranek – Associate Editor

Jim Salicrup

Editor-in-Chief

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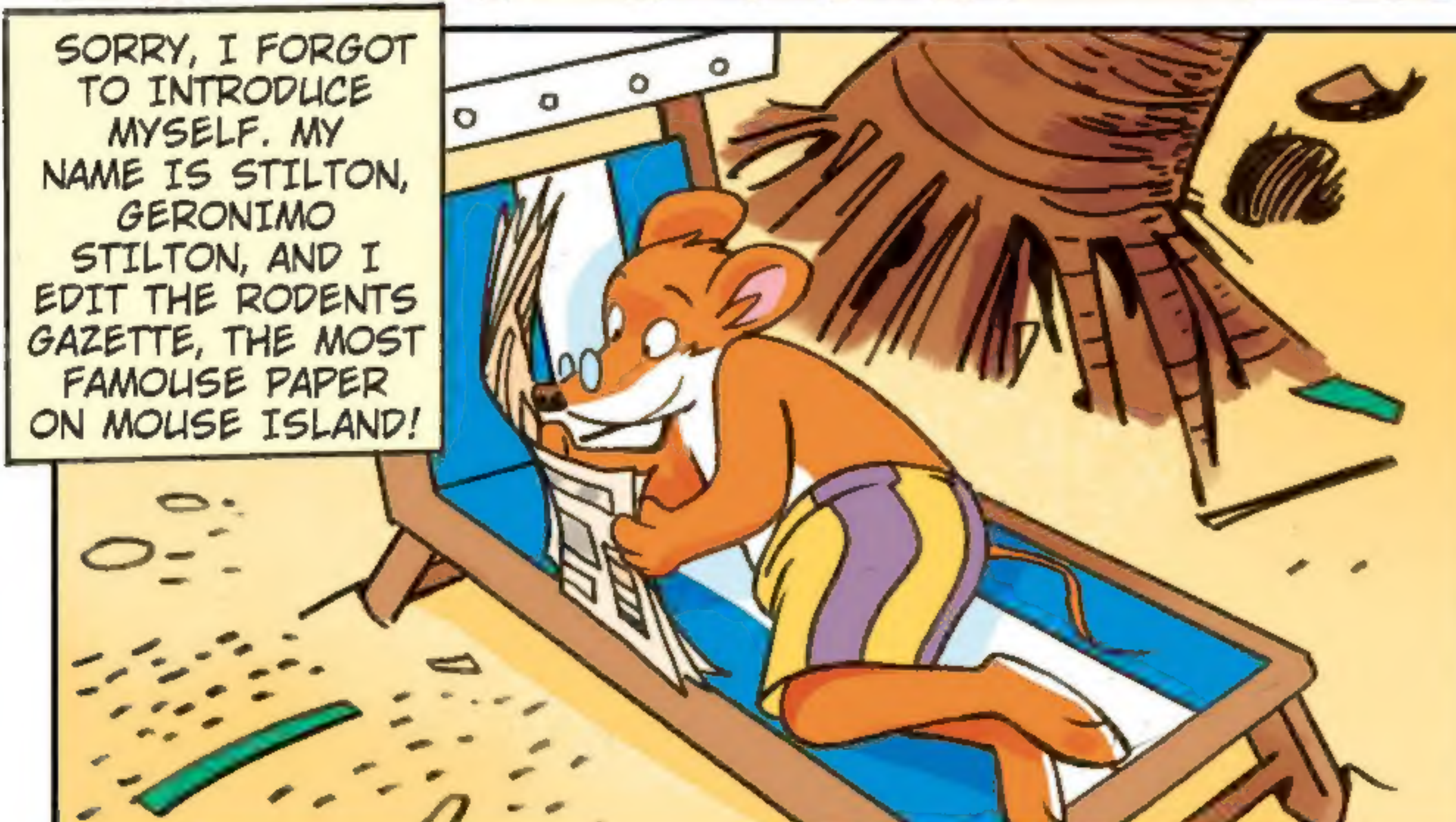
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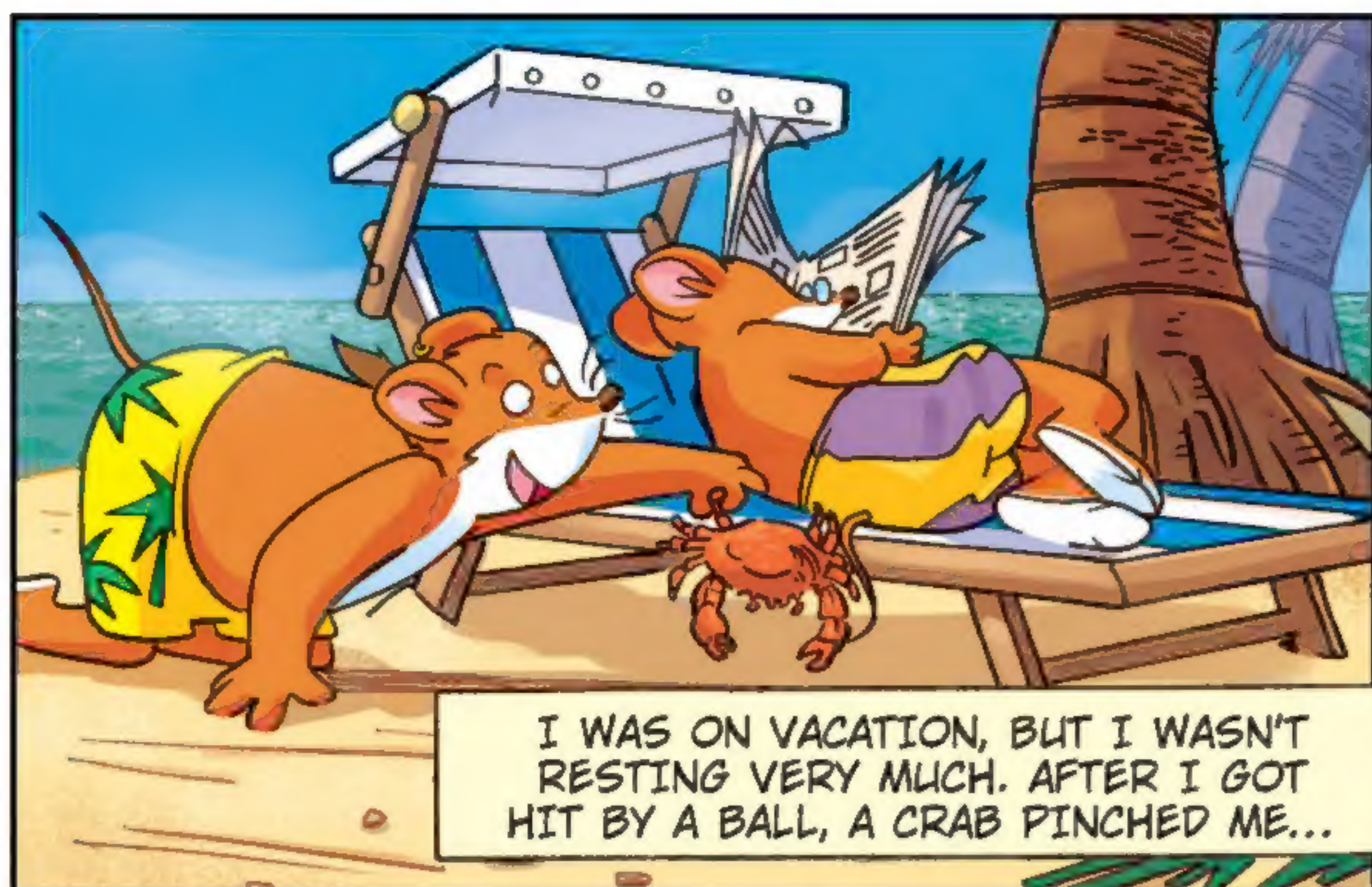
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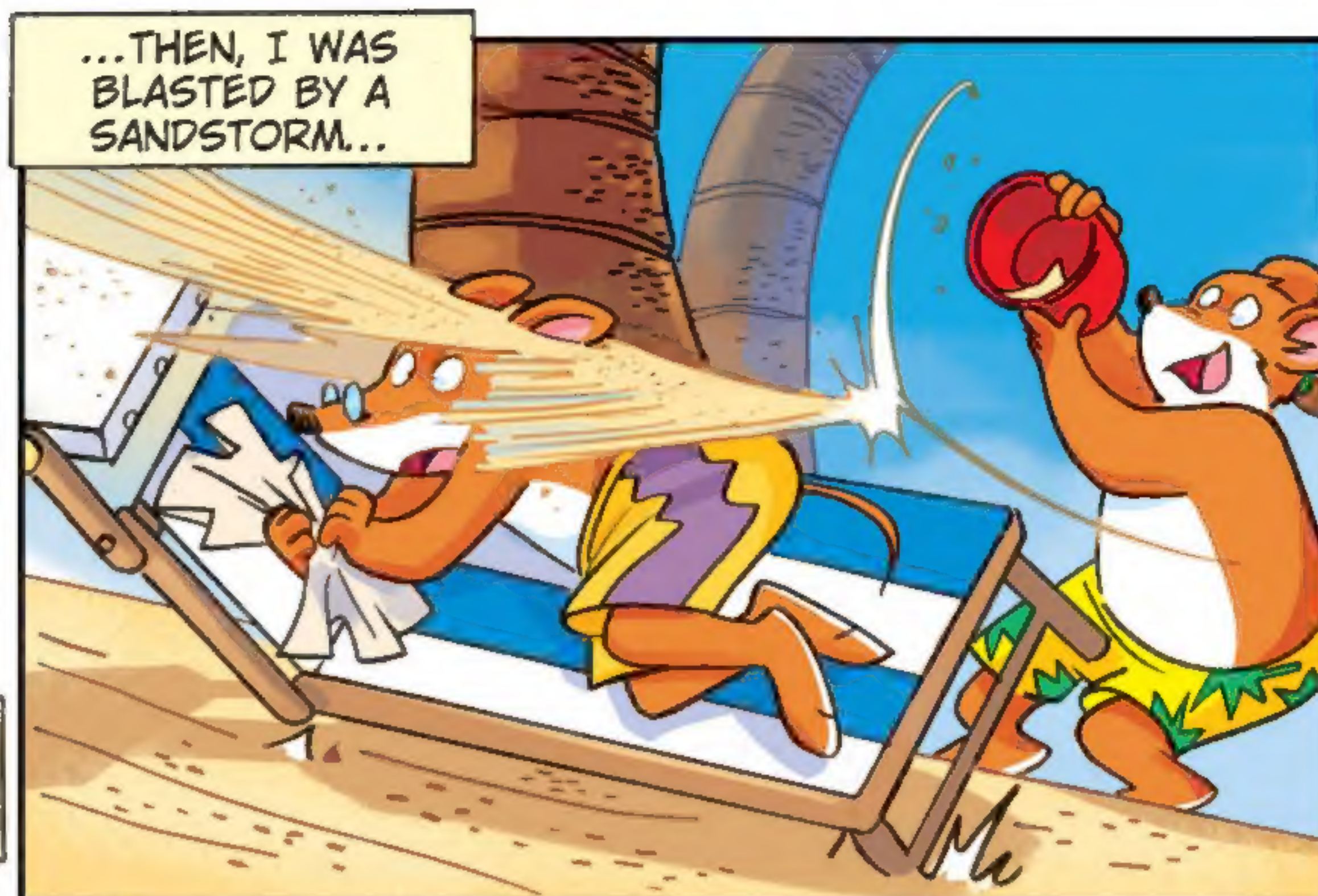
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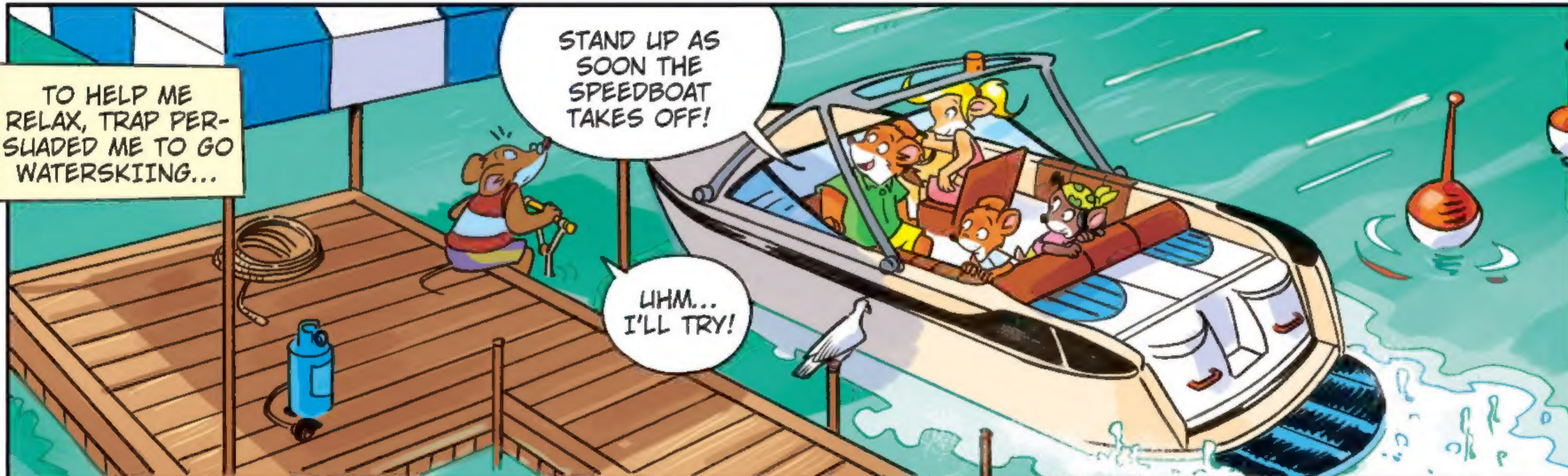
I WAS ON VACATION, BUT I WASN'T RESTING VERY MUCH. AFTER I GOT HIT BY A BALL, A CRAB PINCHED ME...

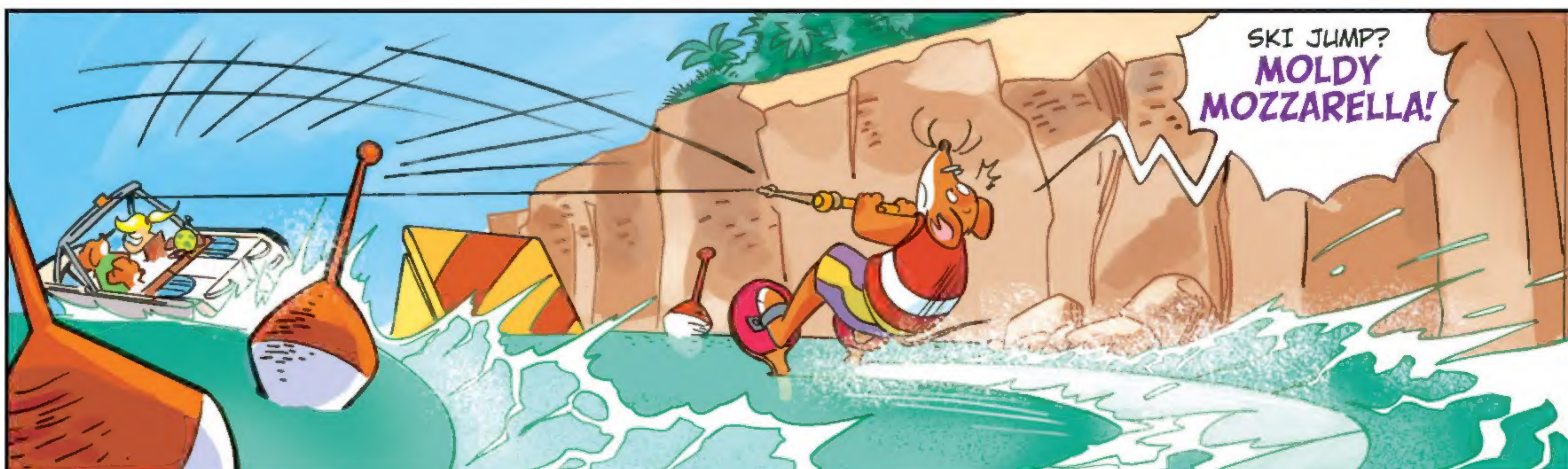
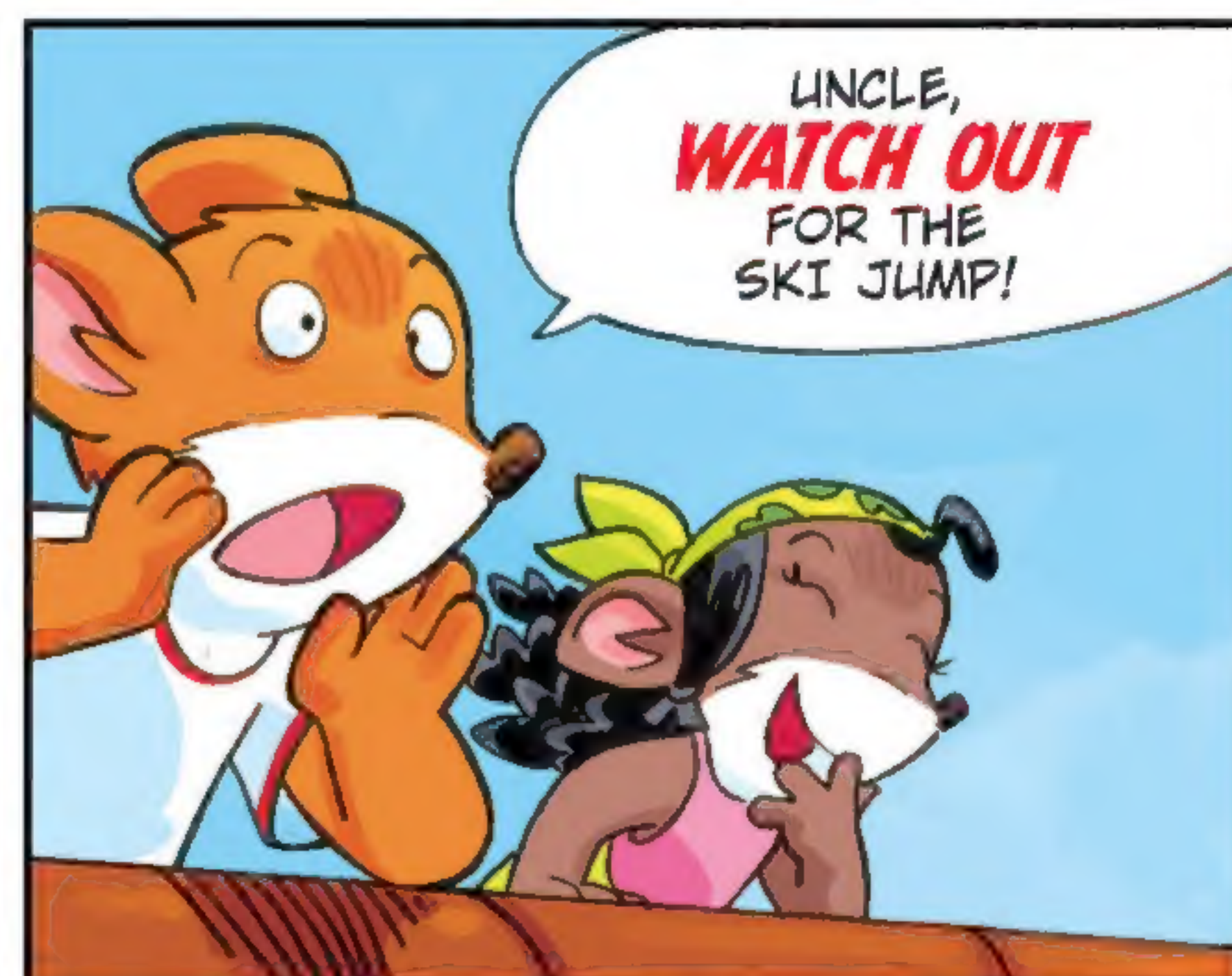
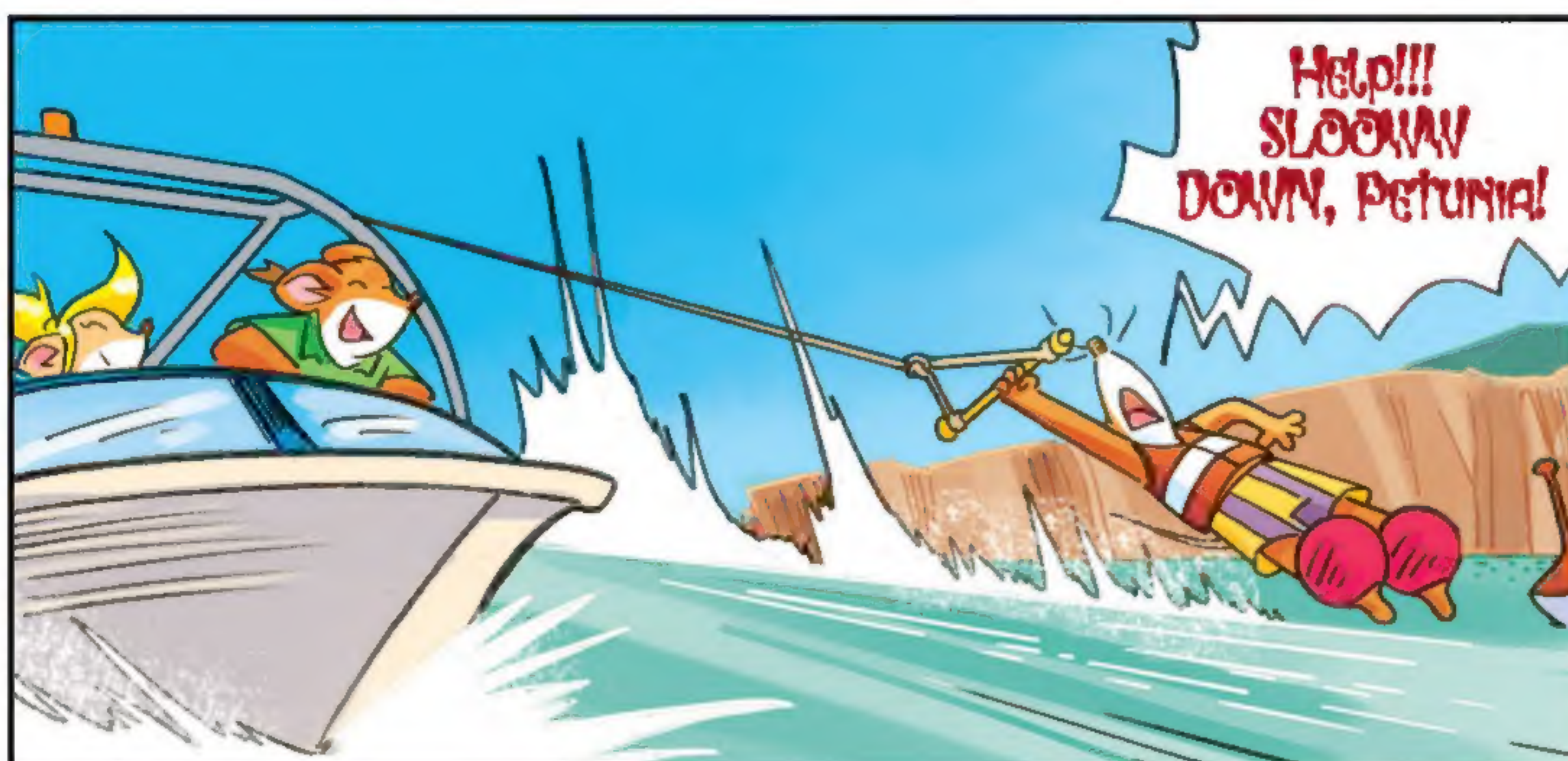
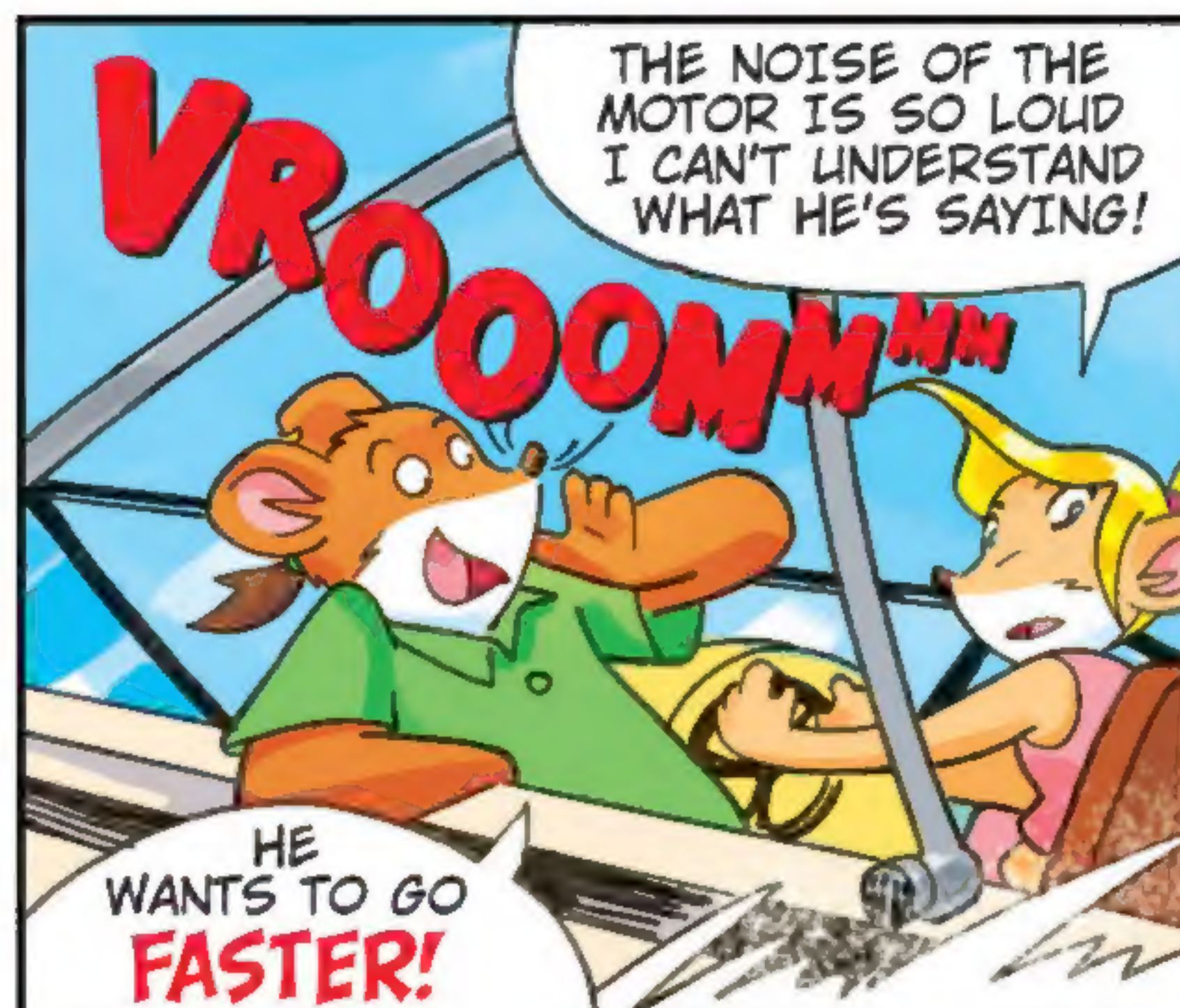
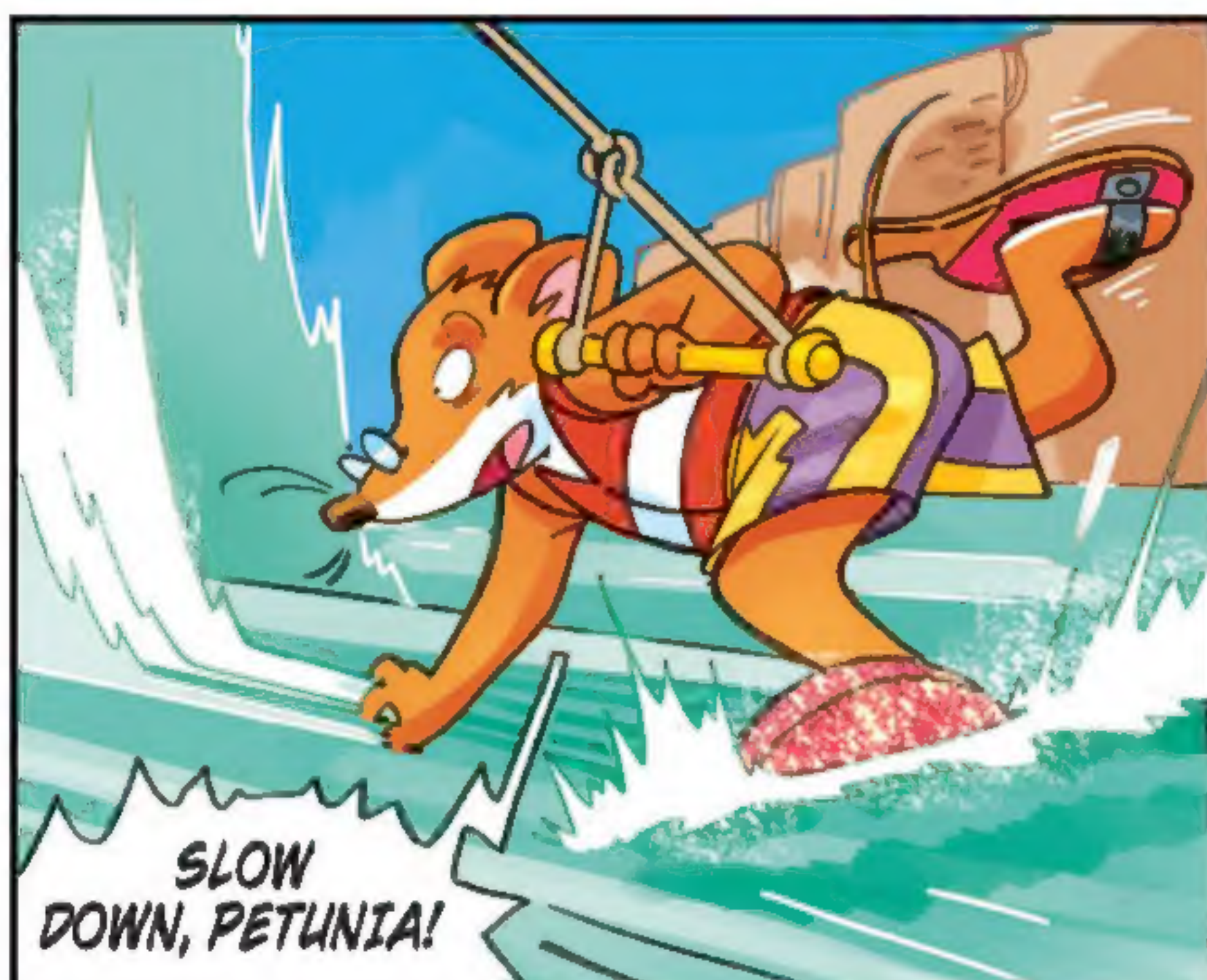
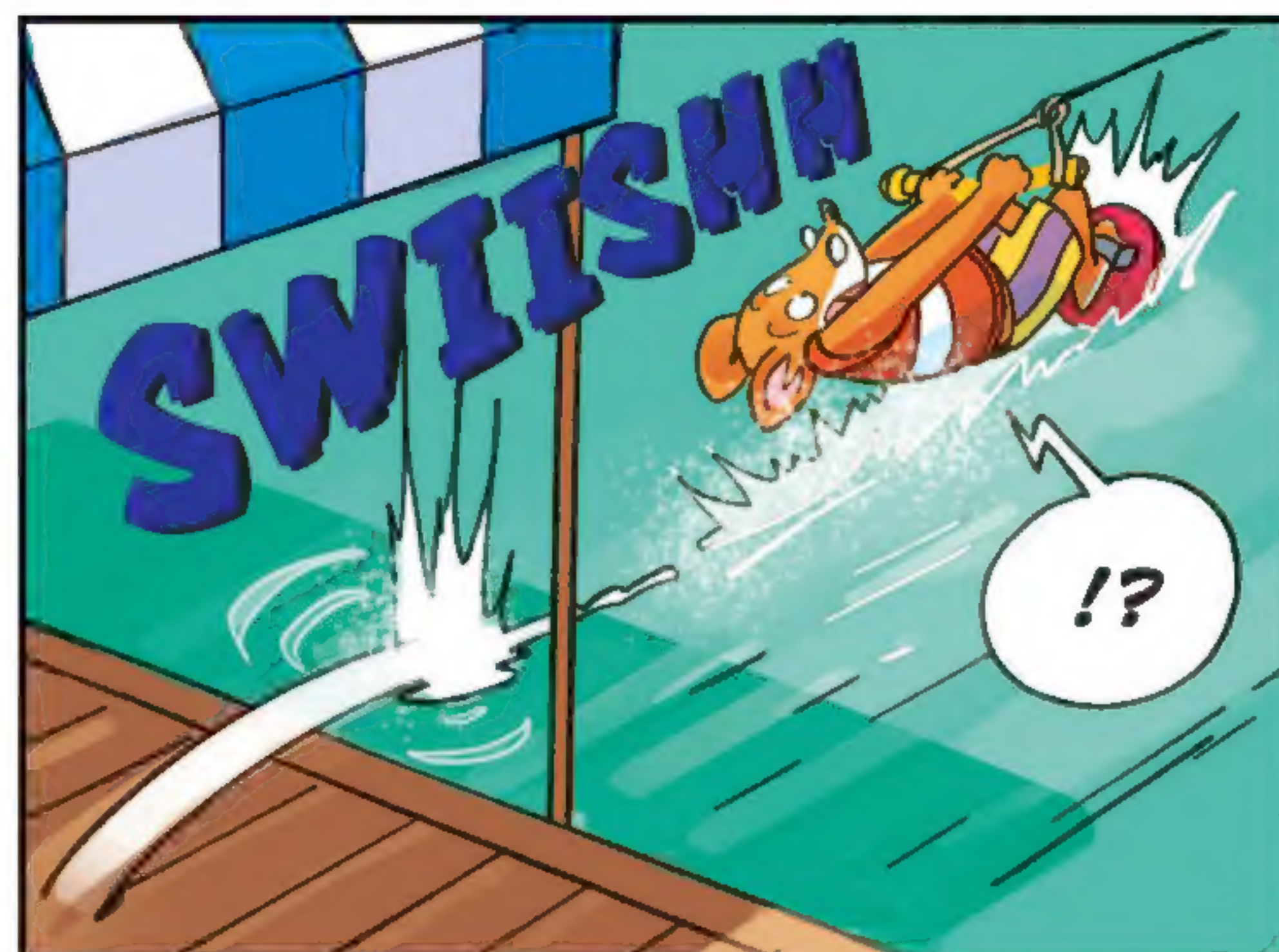
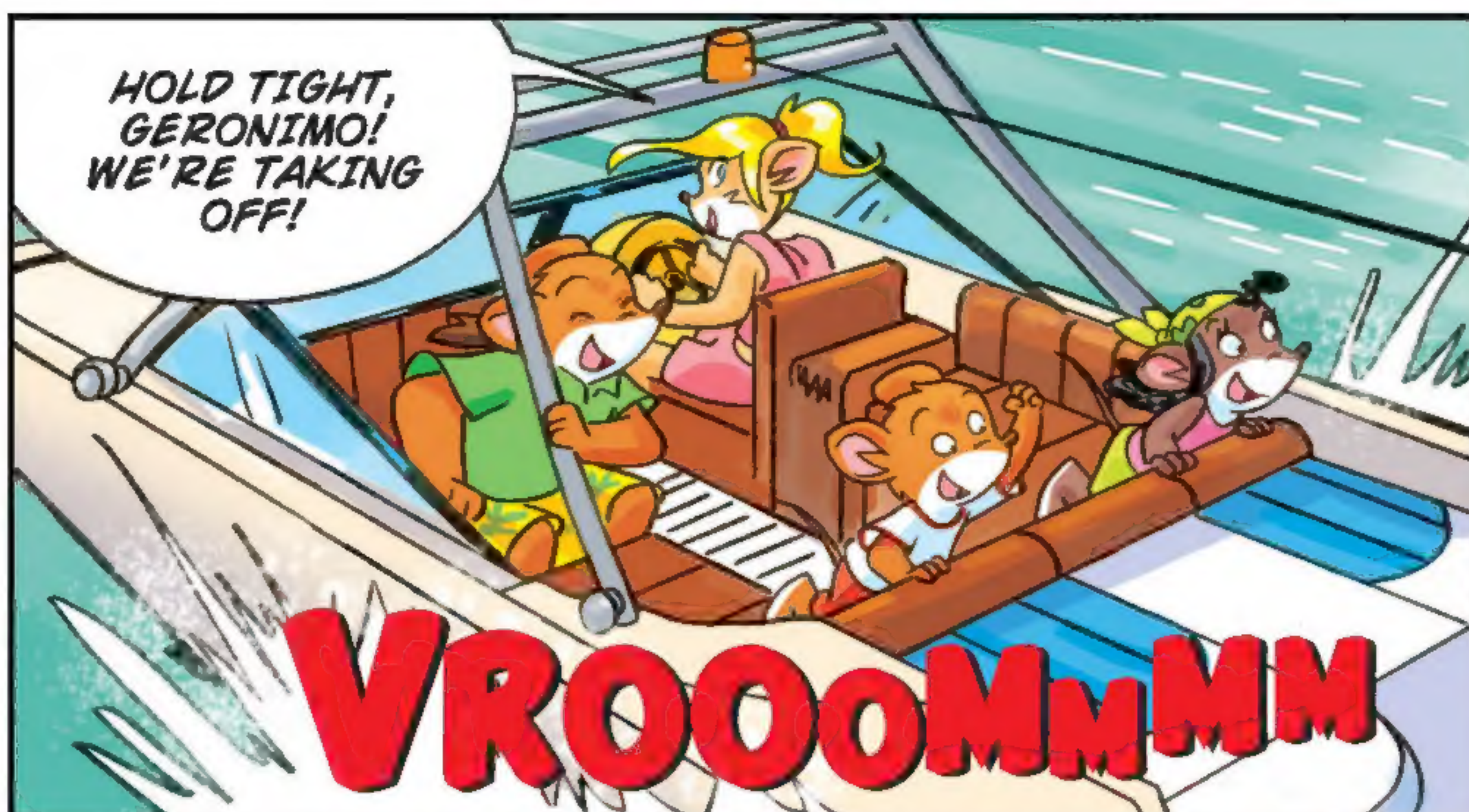


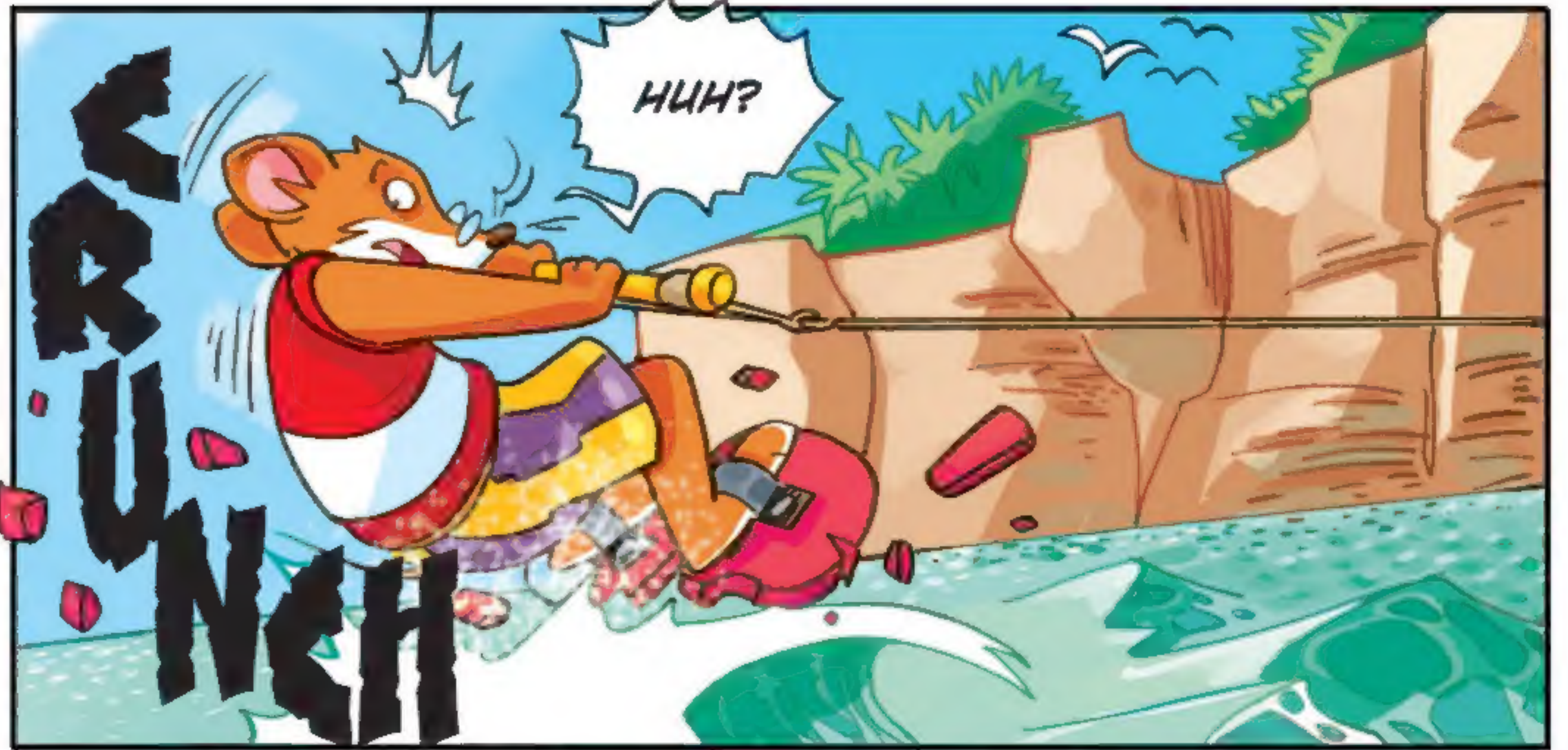
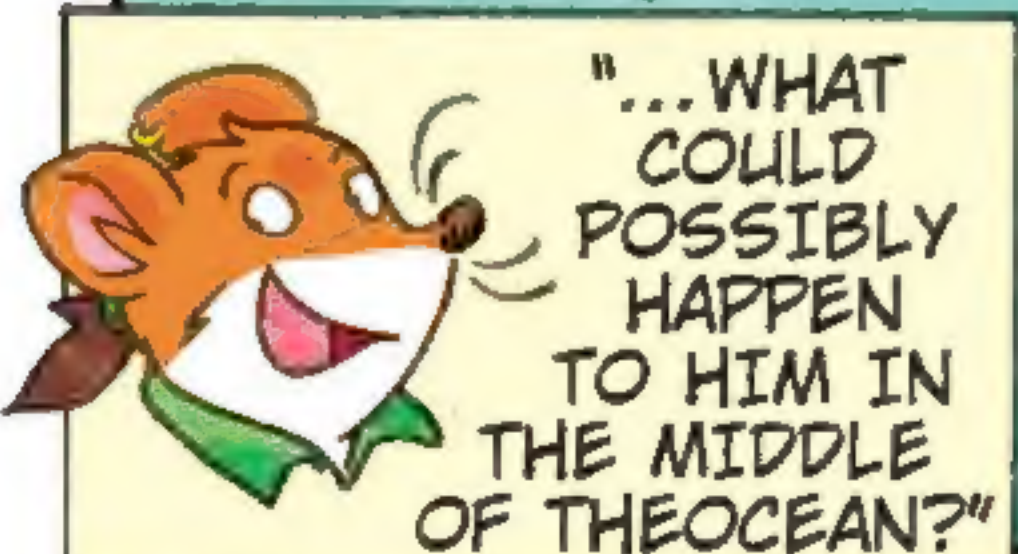
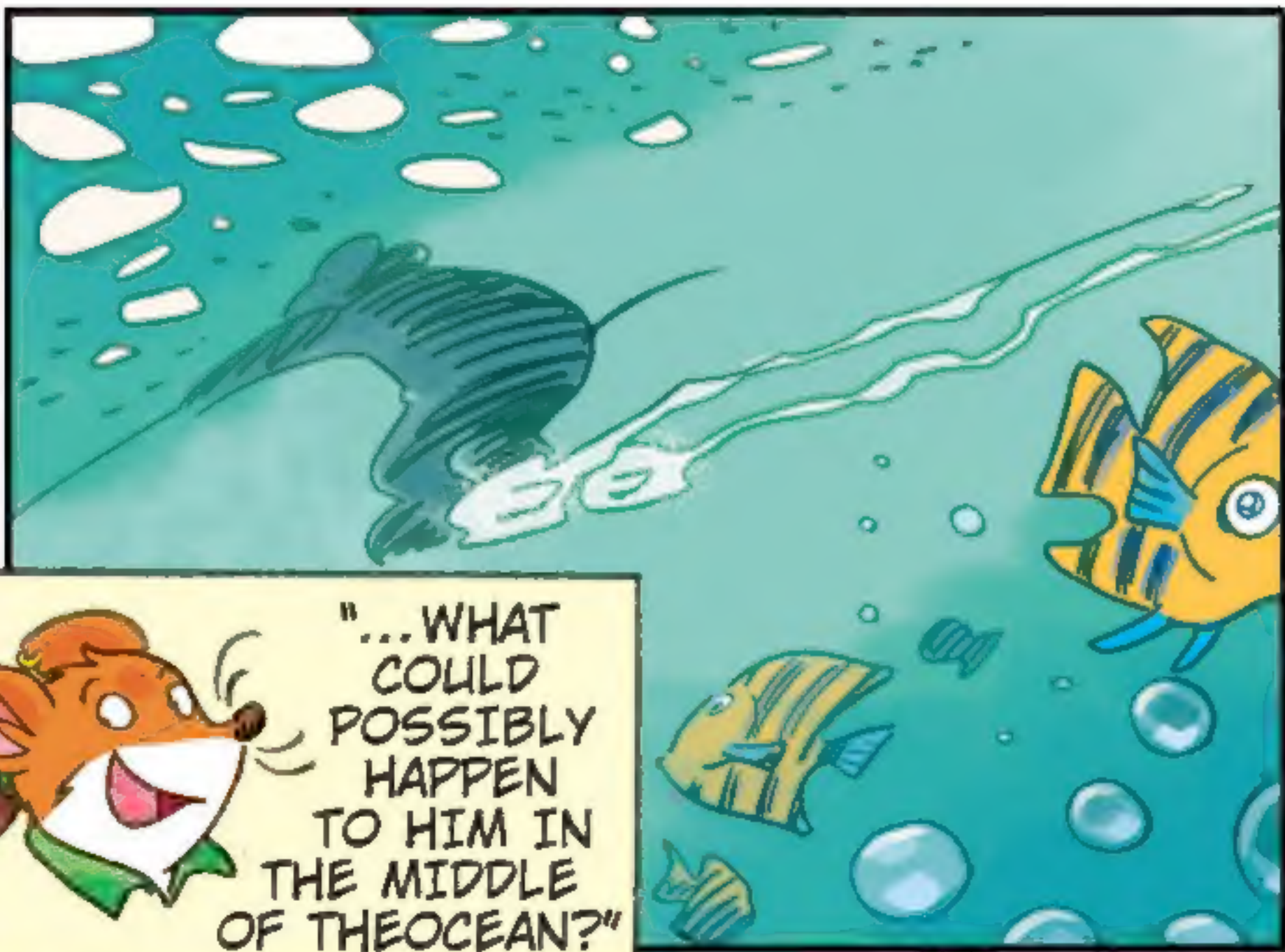
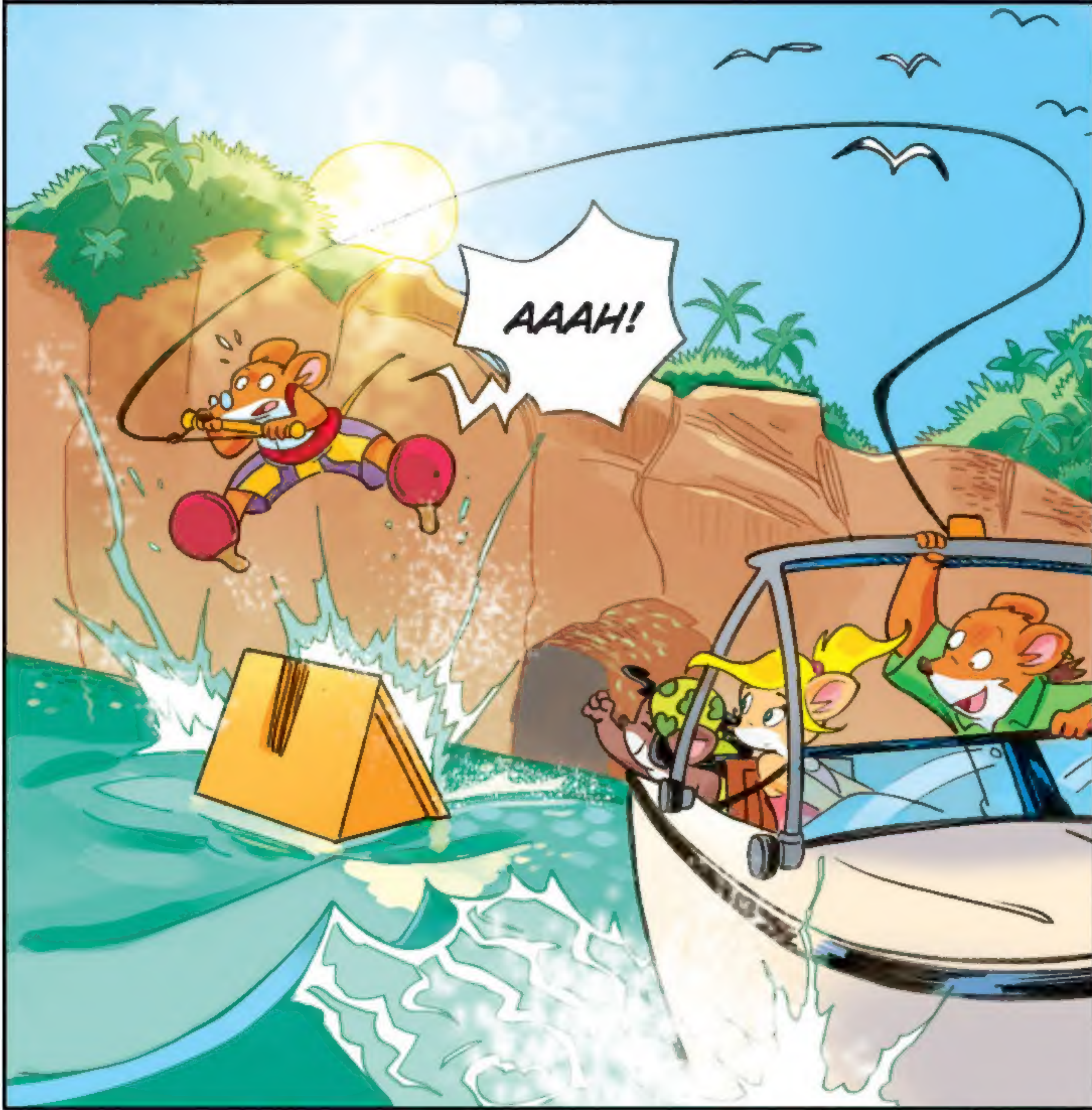
...THEN, I WAS BLASTED BY A SANDSTORM...

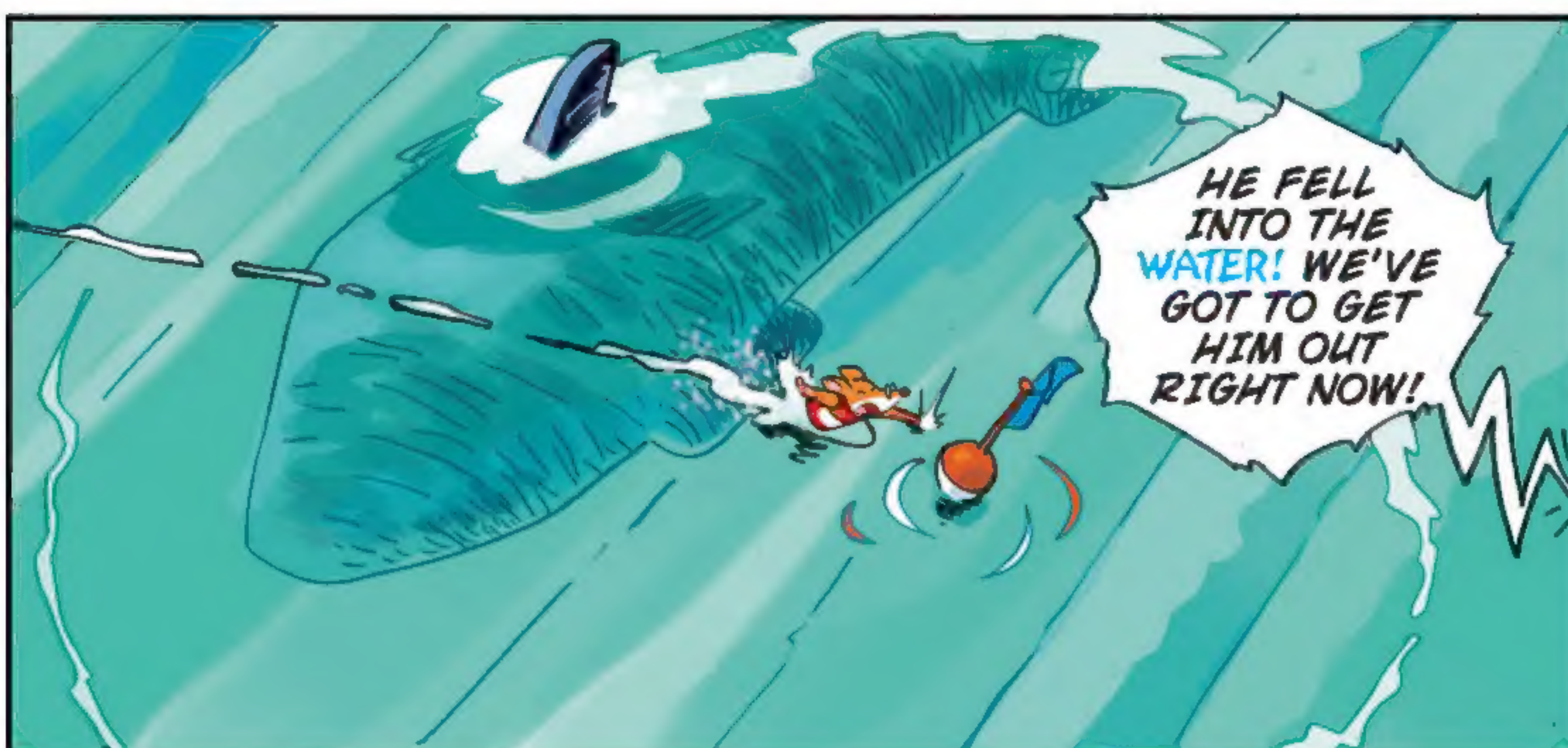
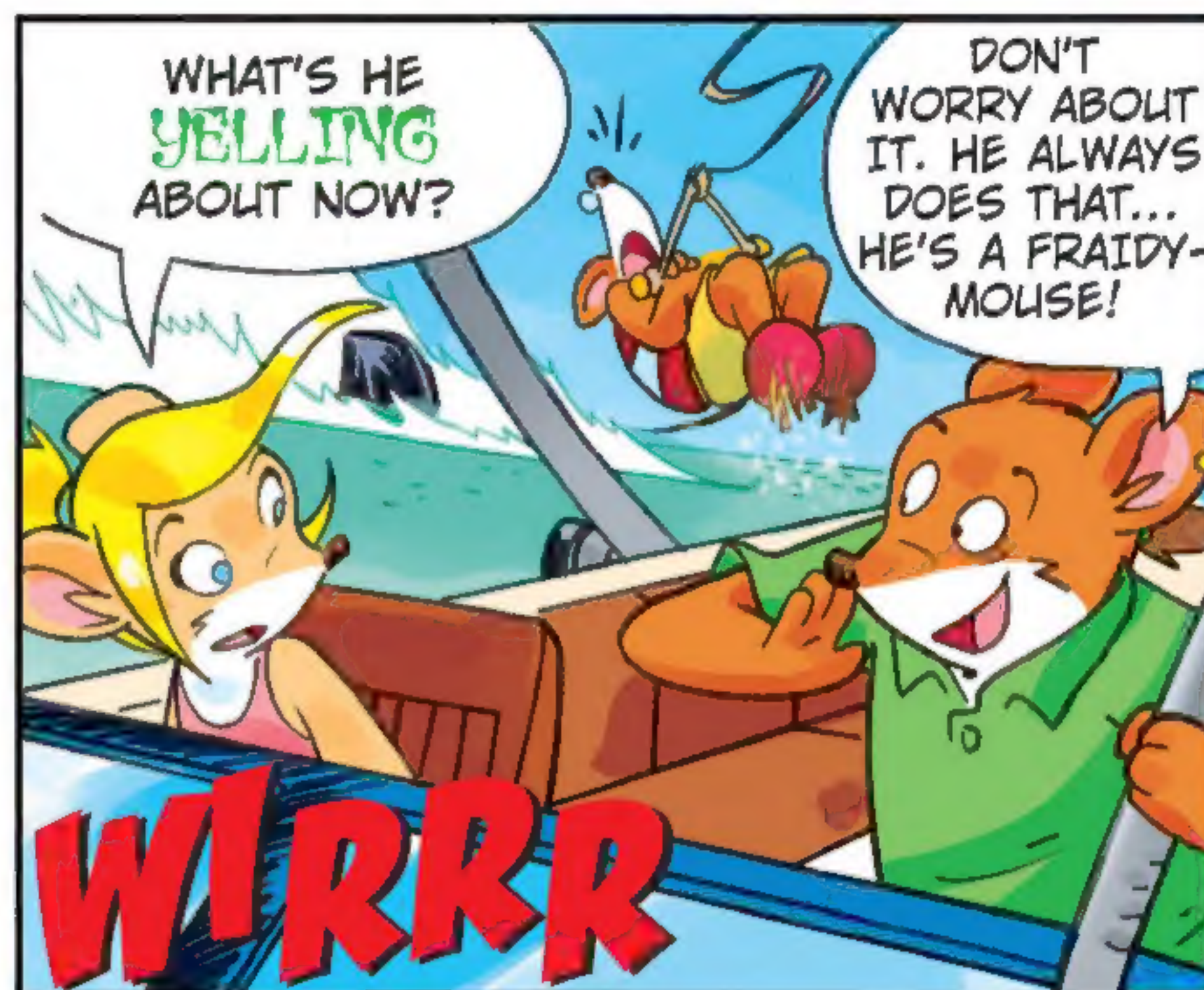
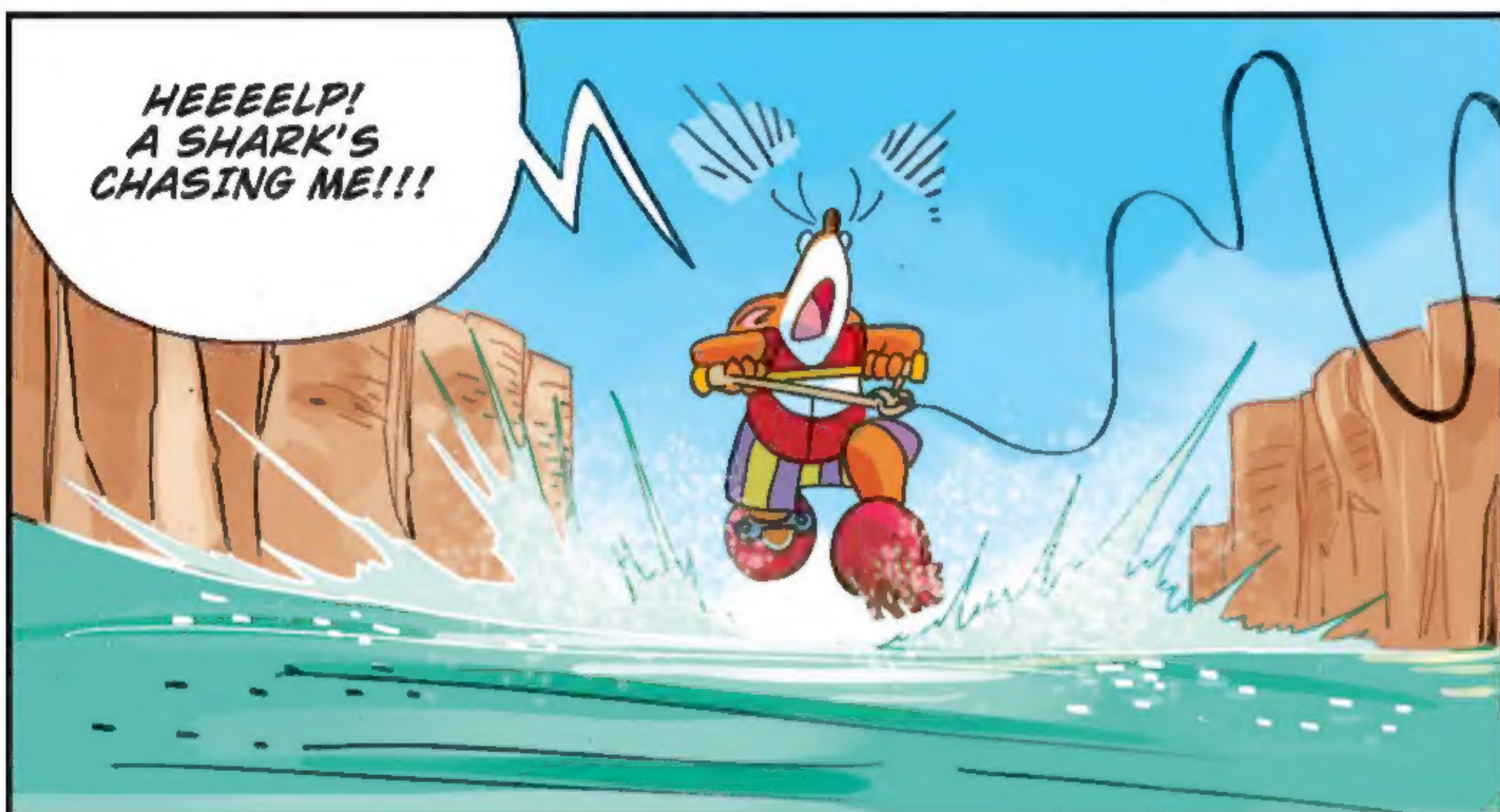
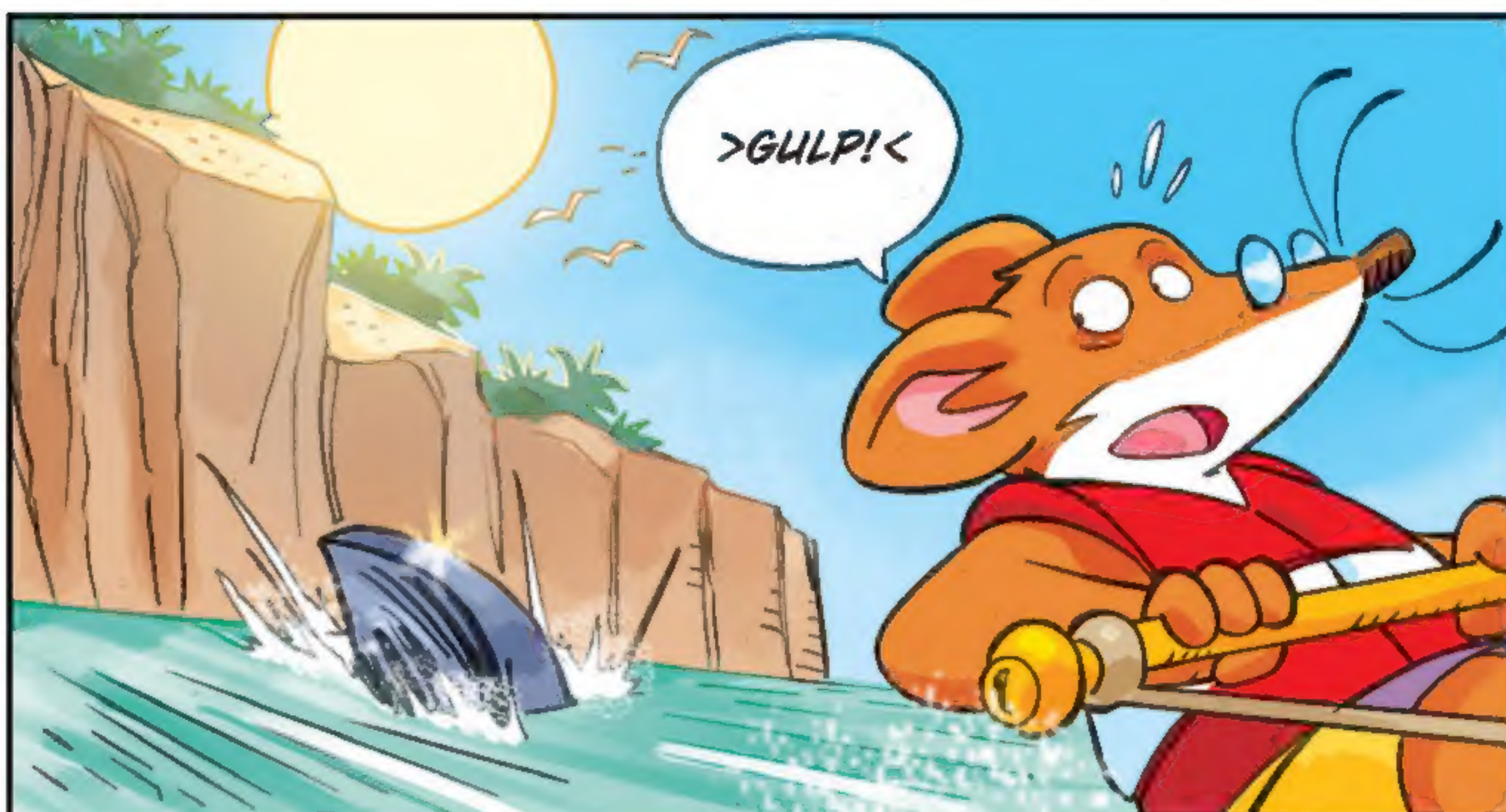


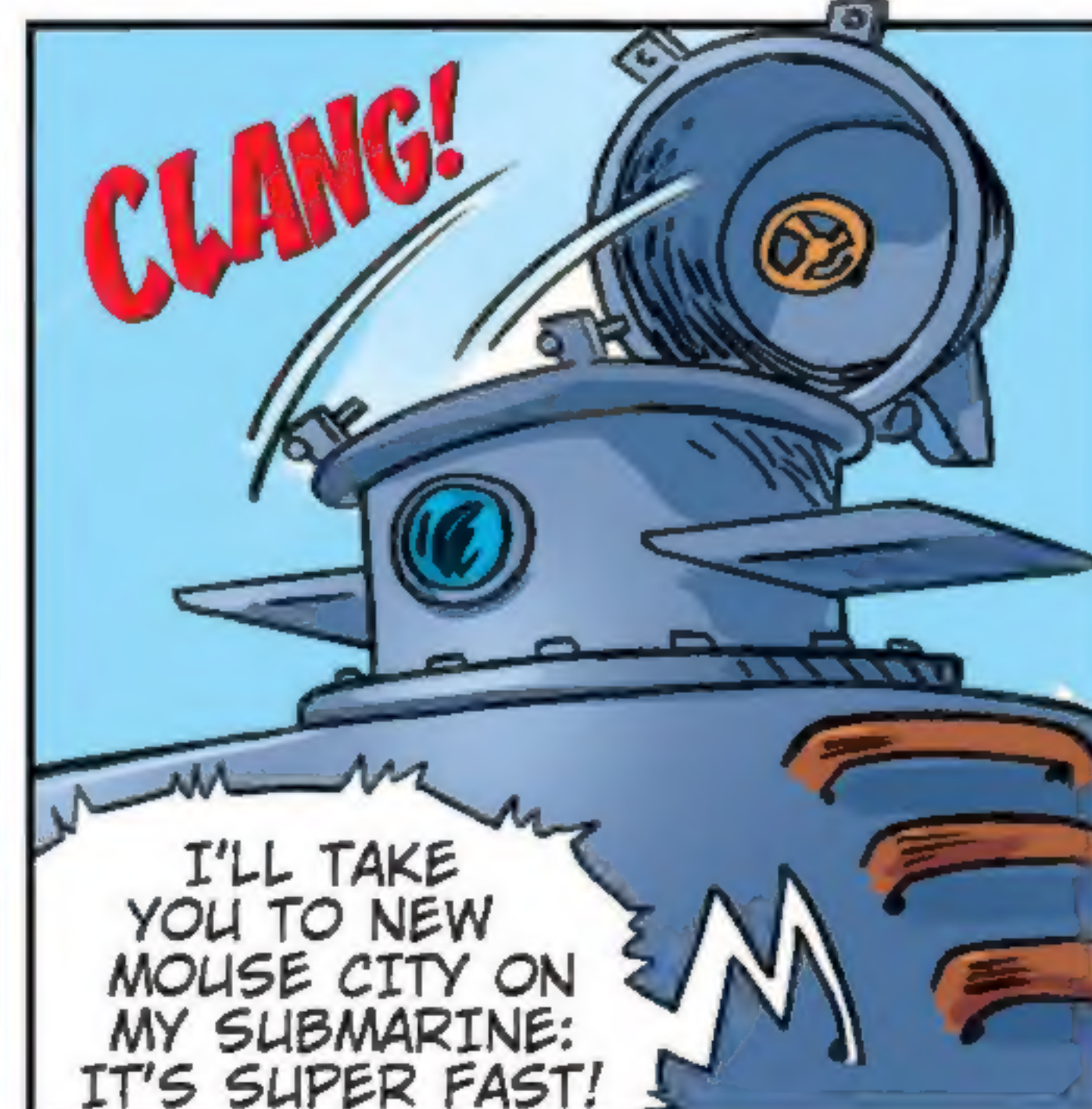
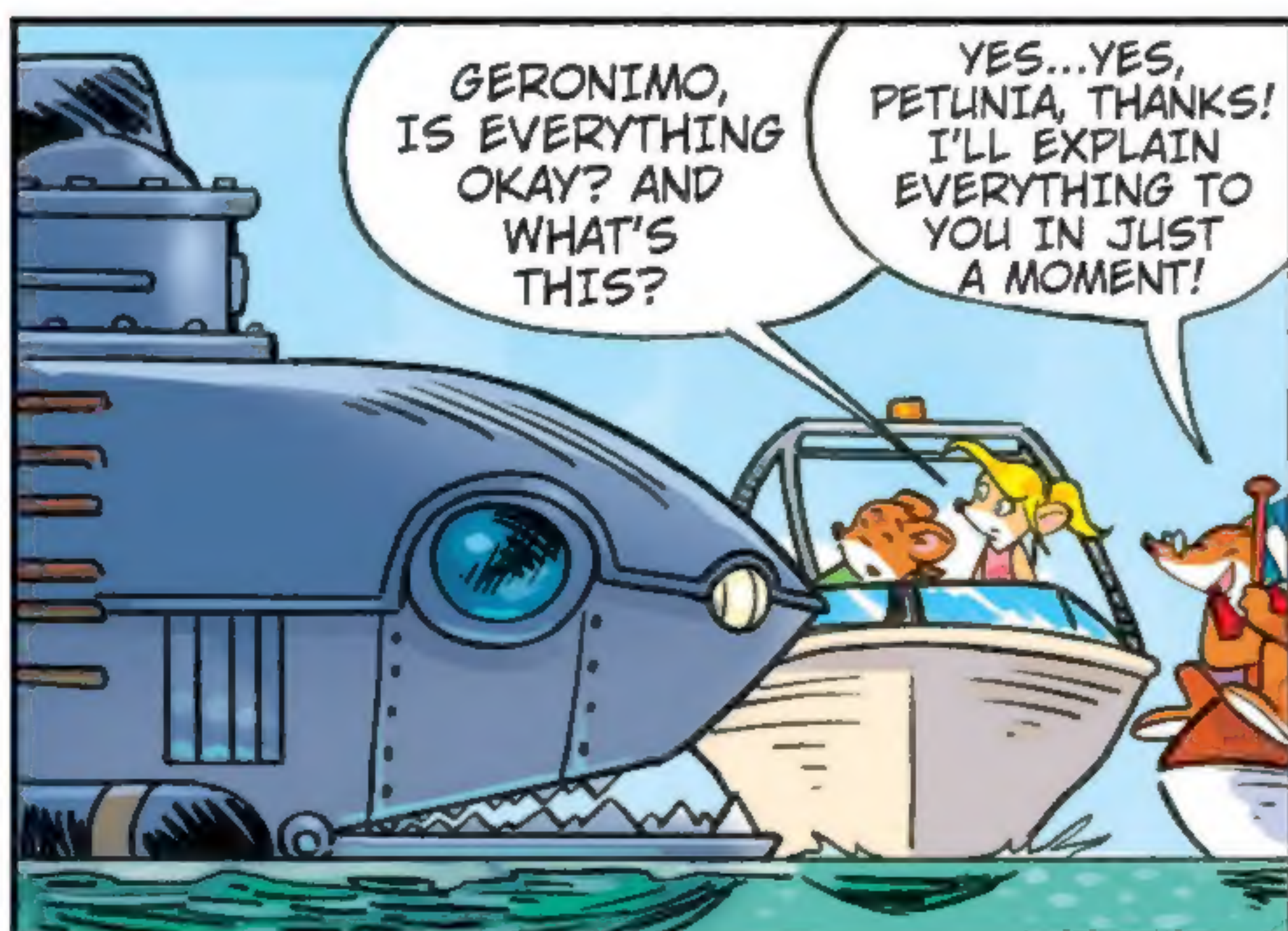
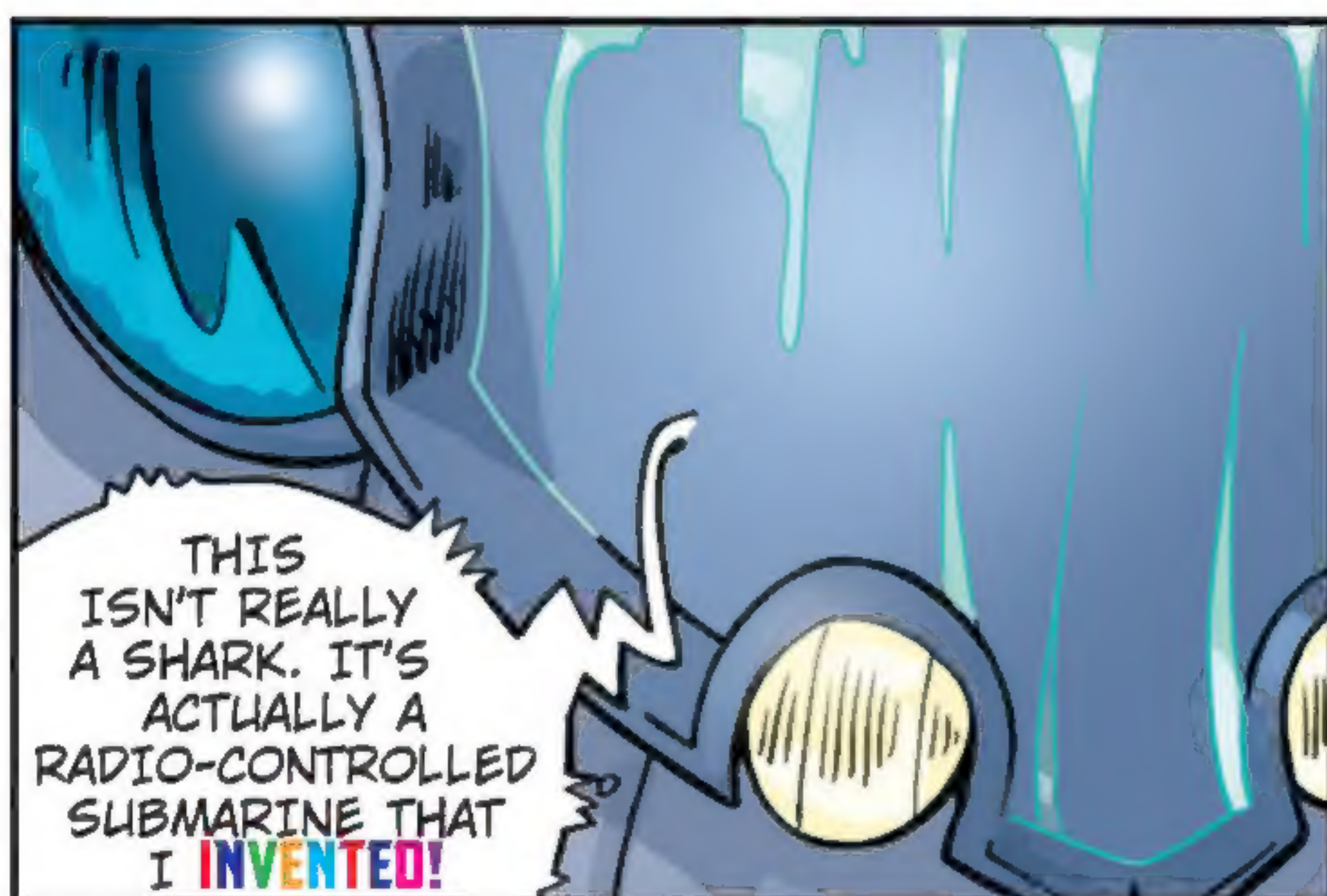
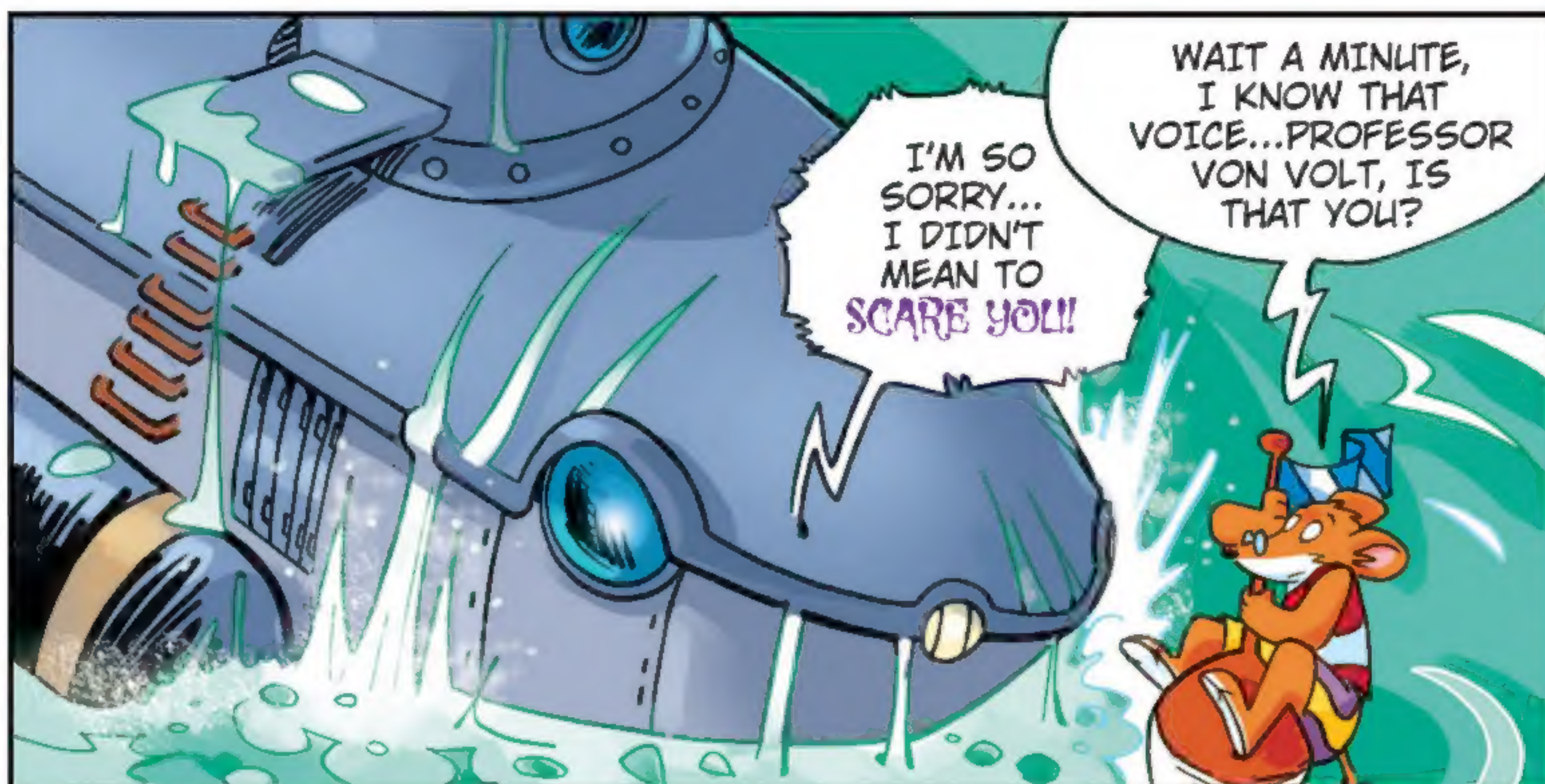
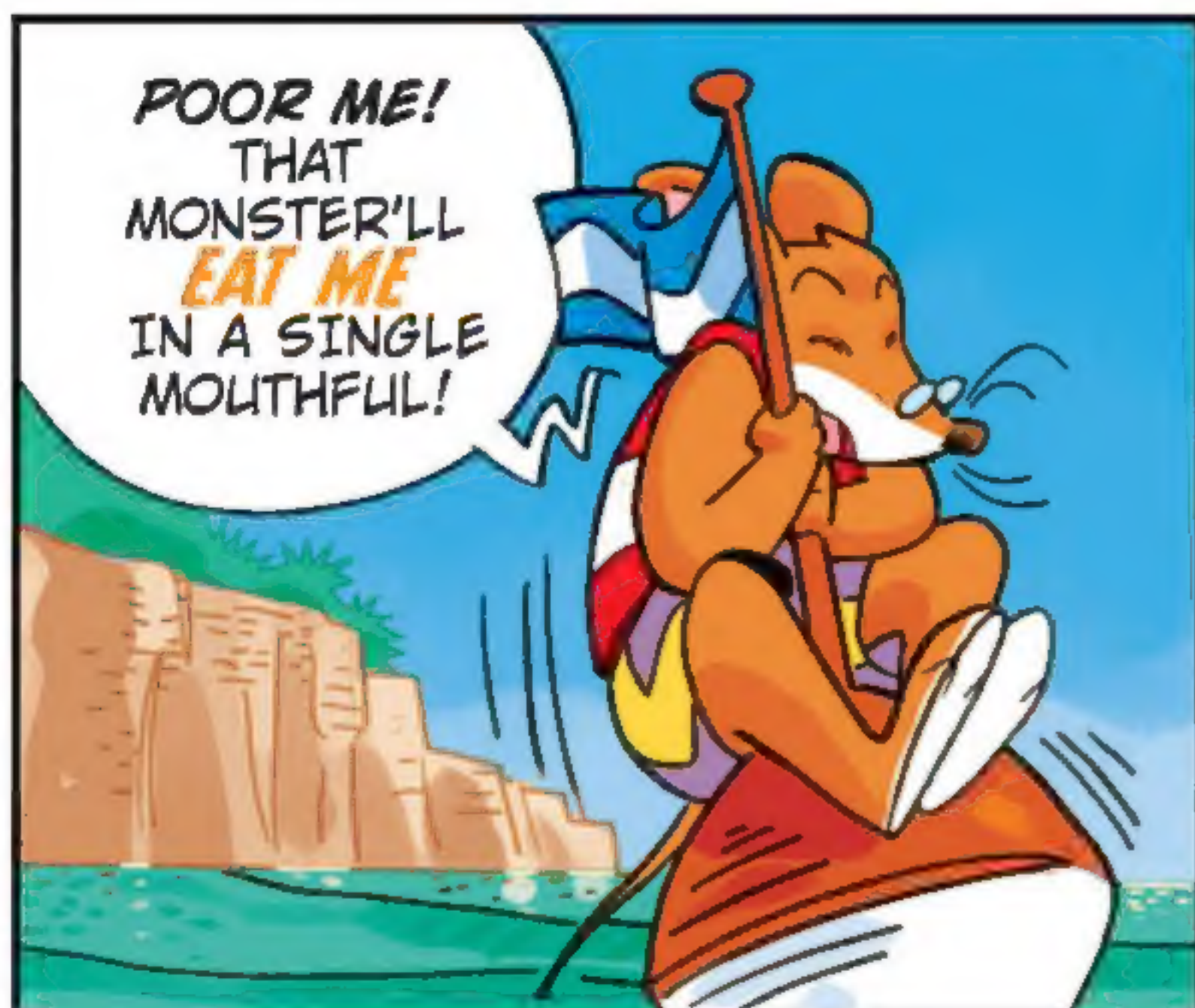
...AND LAST OF ALL, I WAS MISTAKEN FOR A **FISH** BY A FLOCK OF SEAGULLS!



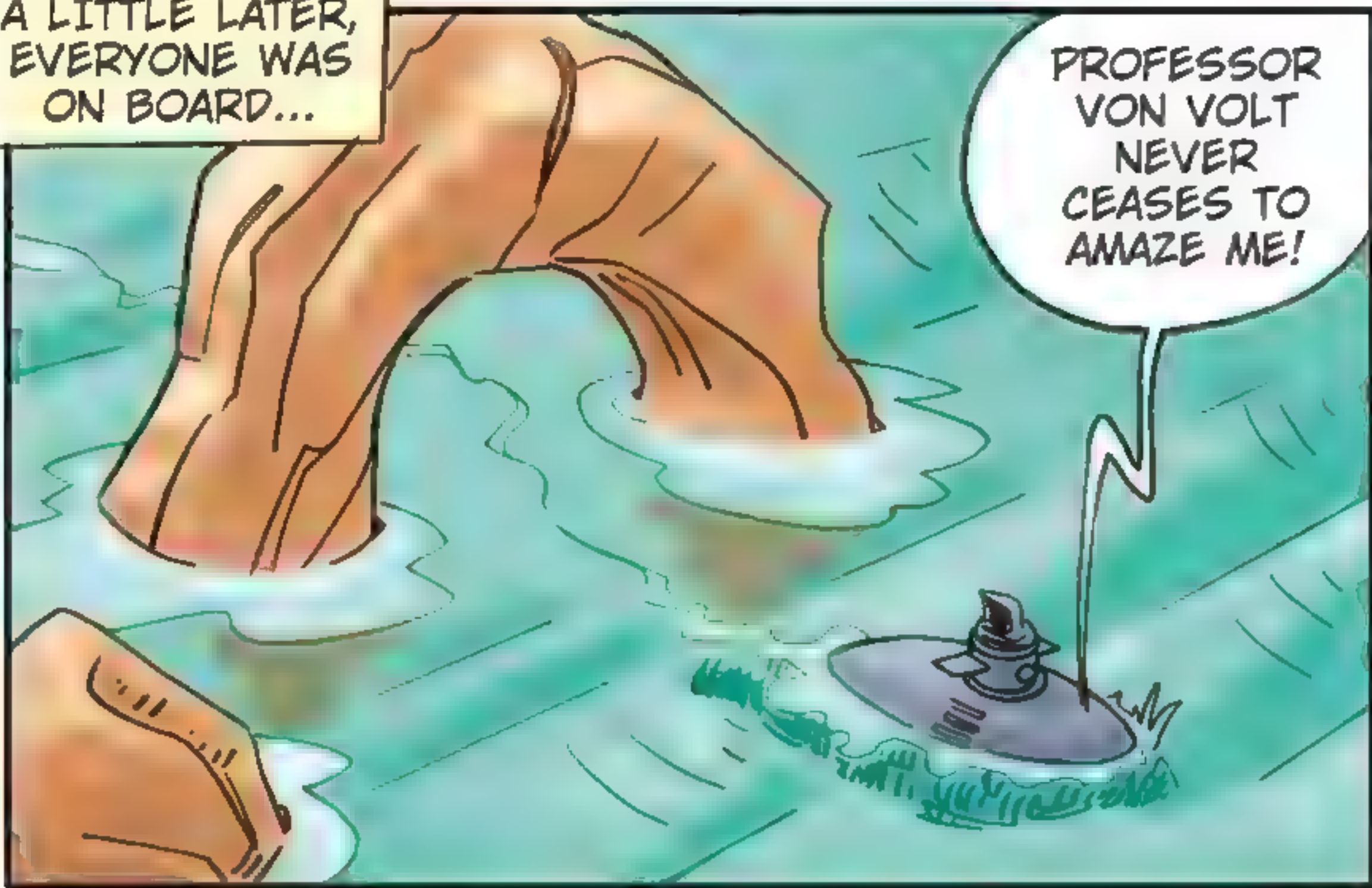




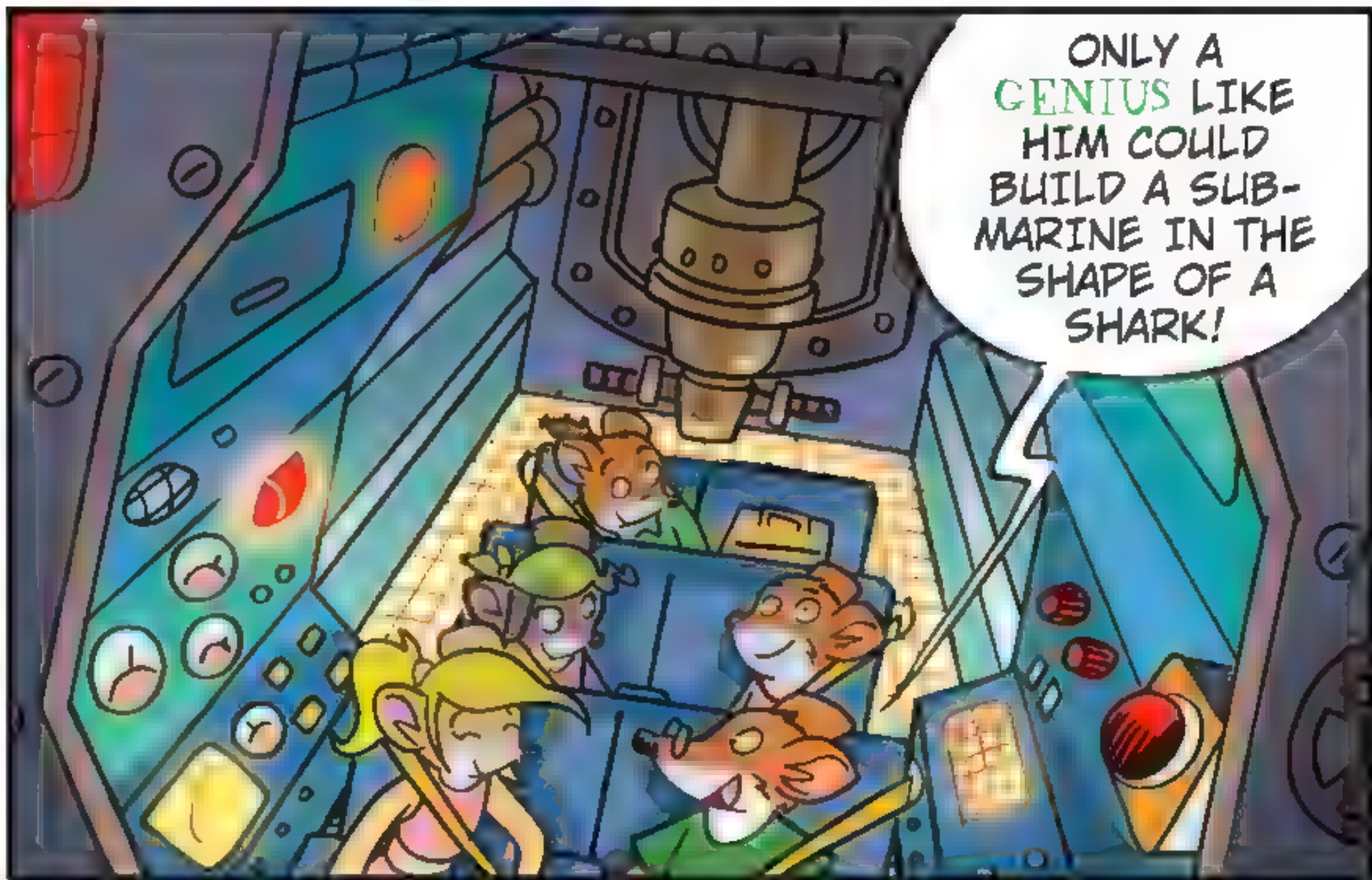




A LITTLE LATER,
EVERYONE WAS
ON BOARD...



PROFESSOR
VON VOLT
NEVER
CEASES TO
AMAZE ME!



ONLY A
CENTUS LIKE
HIM COULD
BUILD A SUB-
MARINE IN THE
SHAPE OF A
SHARK!

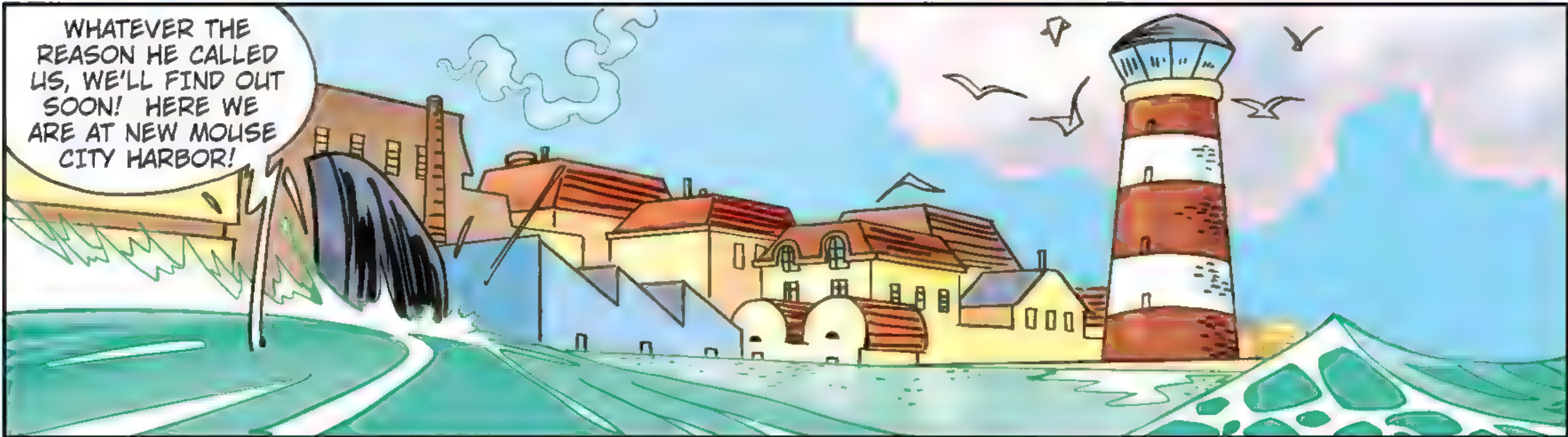


AND THERE'S EVEN
A FRIDGE FULL
OF CH SE!

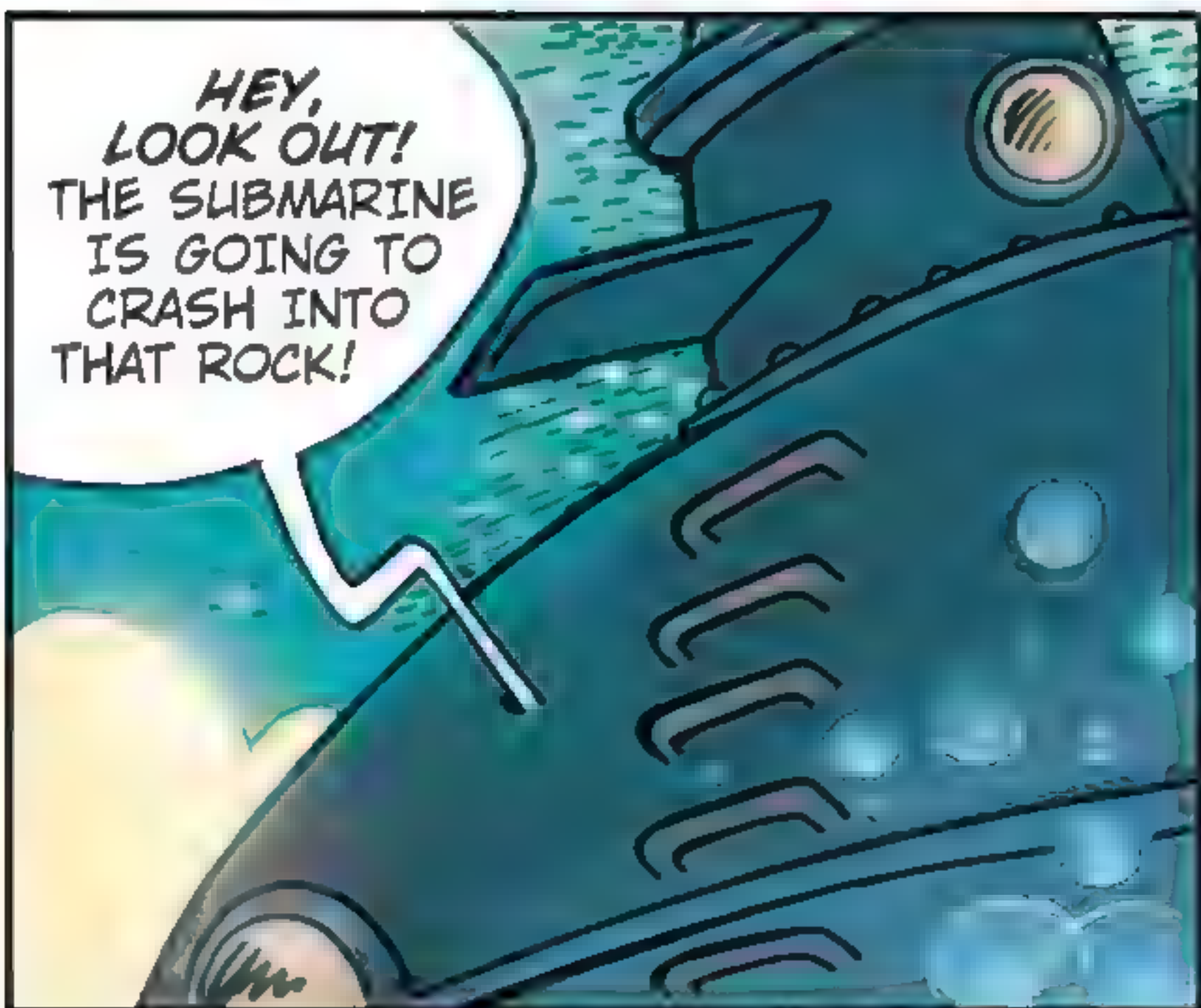


IT MUST BE SOMETHING
REALLY SERIOUS IF HE CAME
LOOKING FOR US WHILE
WE WERE ON
VACATION!

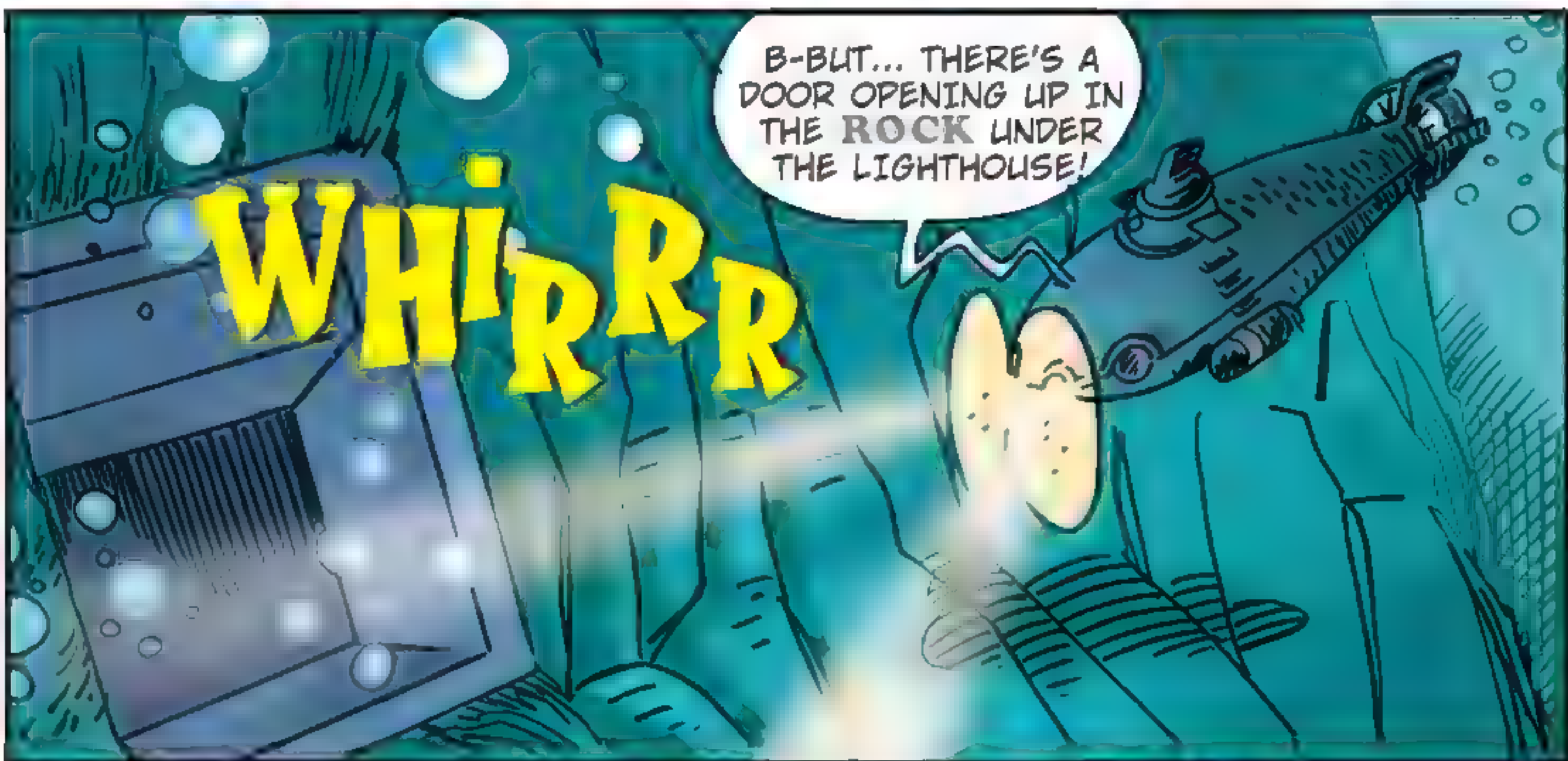
YES,
YOU'RE
RIGHT!



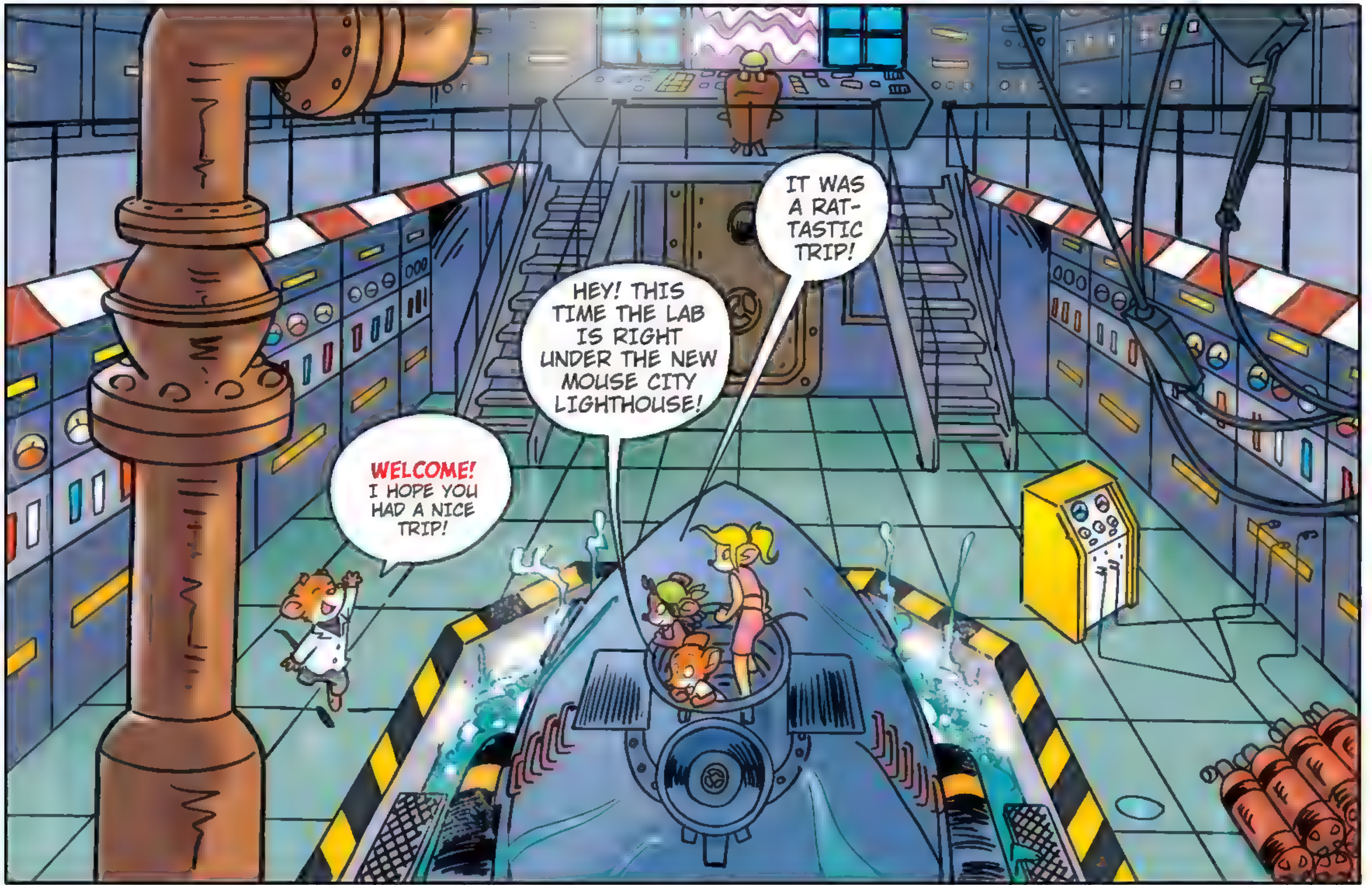
WHATEVER THE
REASON HE CALLED
US, WE'LL FIND OUT
SOON! HERE WE
ARE AT NEW MOUSE
CITY HARBOR!



HEY,
LOOK OUT!
THE SUBMARINE
IS GOING TO
CRASH INTO
THAT ROCK!



B-BUT... THERE'S A
DOOR OPENING UP IN
THE ROCK UNDER
THE LIGHTHOUSE!



WELCOME!
I HOPE YOU
HAD A NICE
TRIP!

HEY! THIS
TIME THE LAB
IS RIGHT
UNDER THE NEW
MOUSE CITY
LIGHTHOUSE!

IT WAS A RAT-
TASTIC
TRIP!



WERE YOU
THINKING OF
BRINGING THAT
FRIDGE WITH
YOU, TRAP?

OF COURSE!
YOU WOULDN'T
WANT TO LEAVE
THIS DELICIOUS
CHEESE HERE!

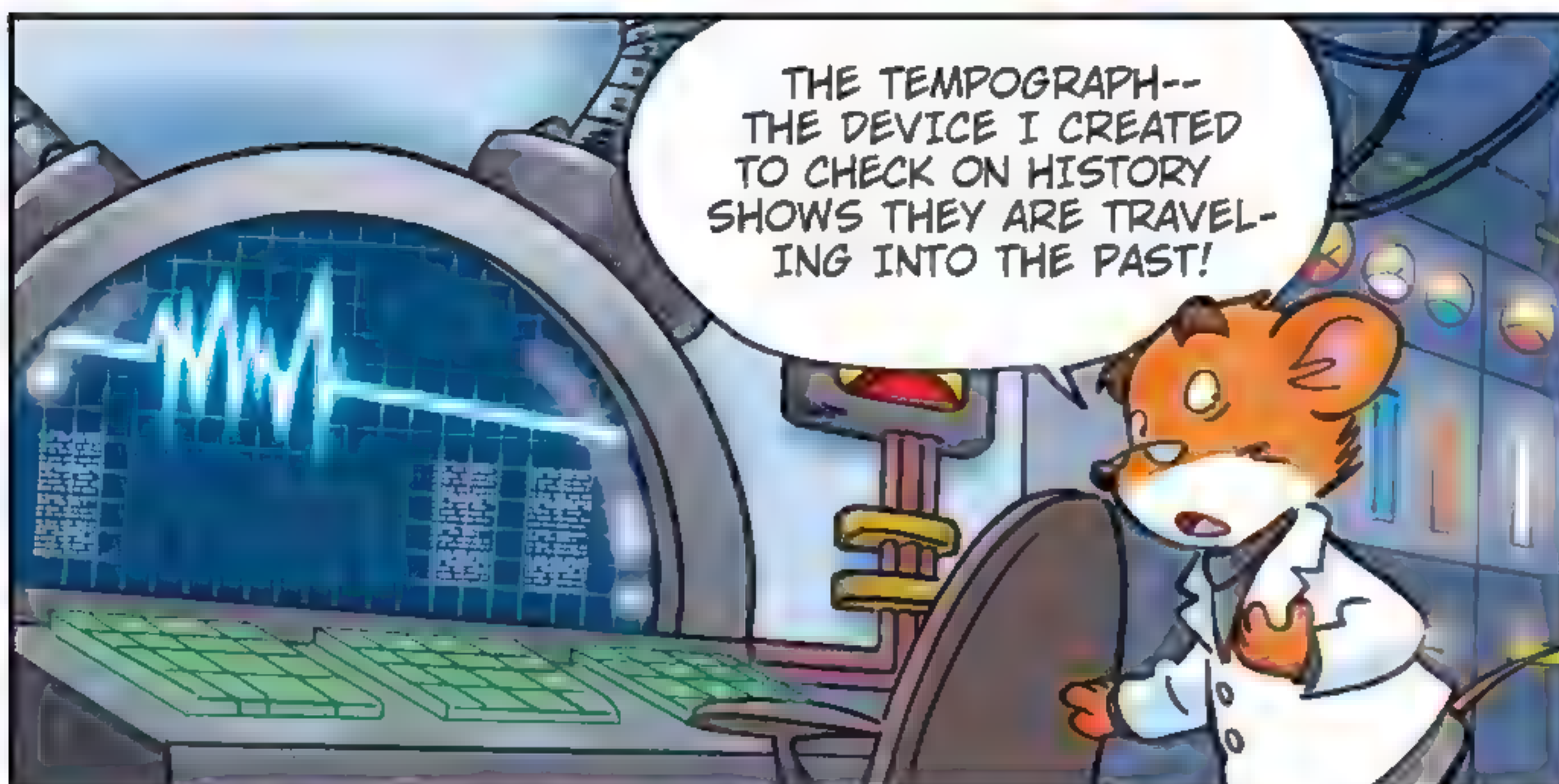


I'M SORRY I BOTHERED
YOU, BUT I DIDN'T
HAVE ANY CHOICE:
THE PIRATE CATS
ARE BACK
IN ACTION!



THE
P-PIRATE
CATS?

THEM
AGAIN!



THE TEMPOGRAPH--
THE DEVICE I CREATED
TO CHECK ON HISTORY
SHOWS THEY ARE TRAVEL-
ING INTO THE PAST!



THOSE CHEESE
HEADS ARE TRYING
TO CHANGE **HISTORY**
TO THEIR
ADVANTAGE AGAIN!

TELL US, WHERE
ARE THEY HEADED
THIS TIME,
PROFESSOR?



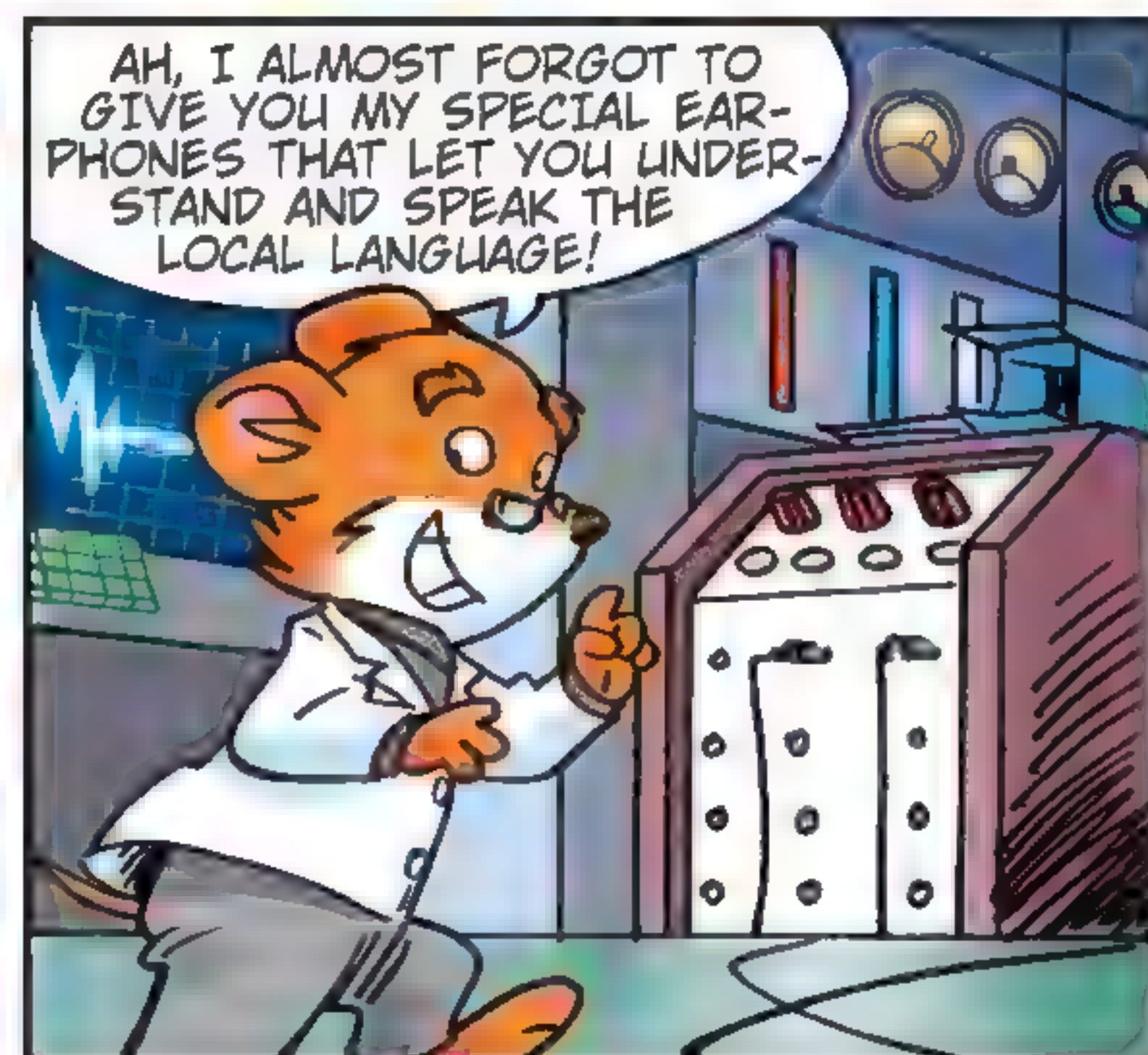
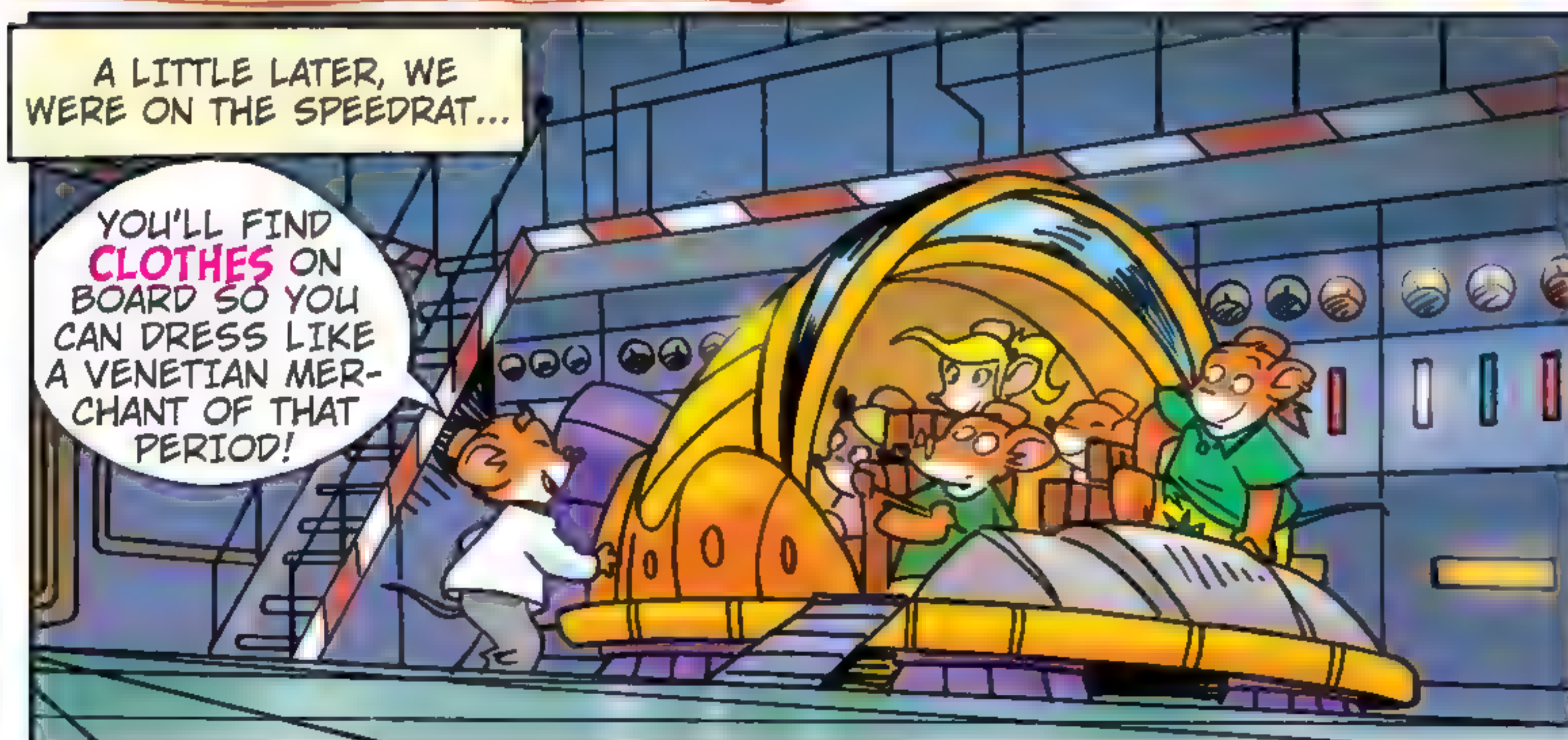
CHINA

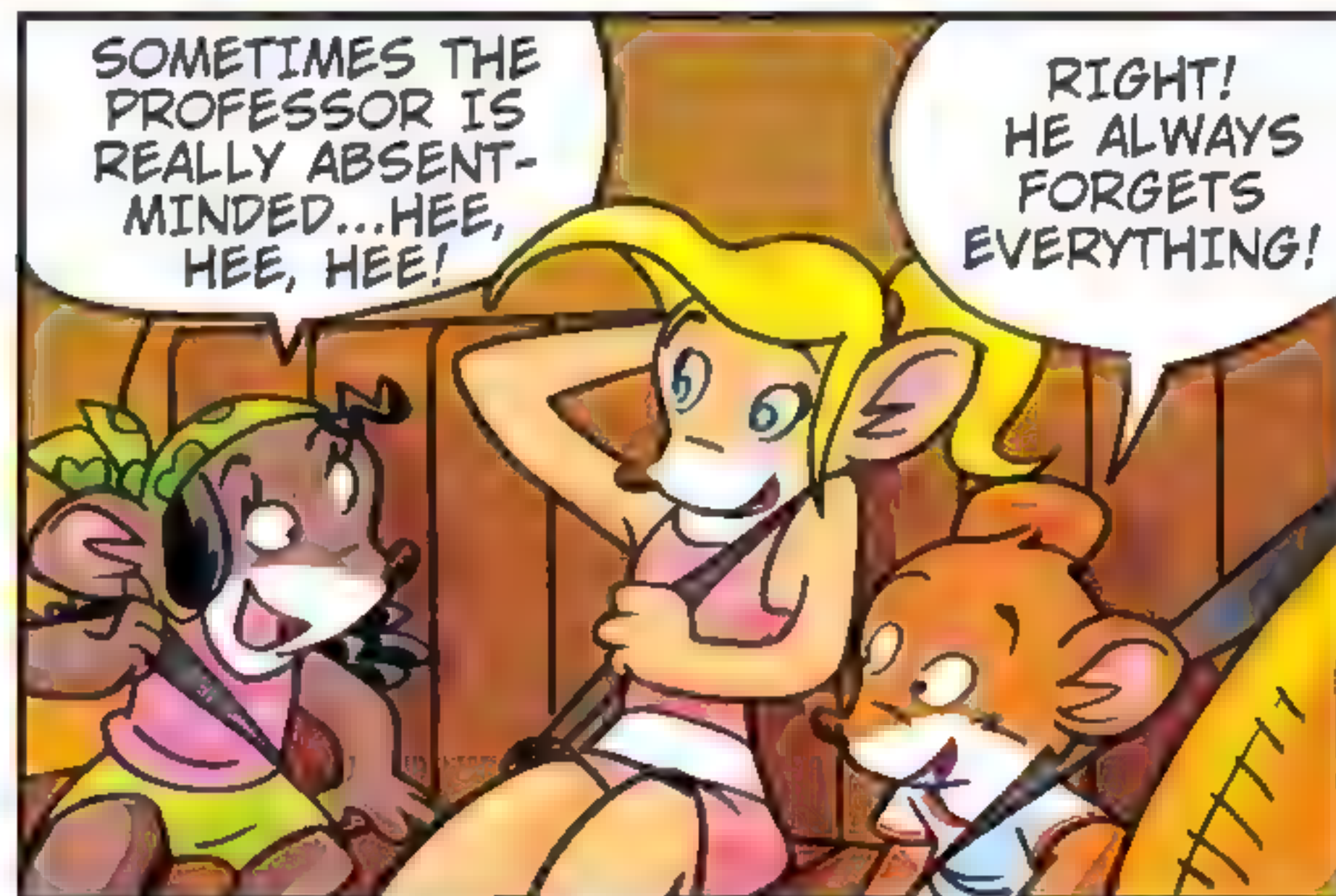
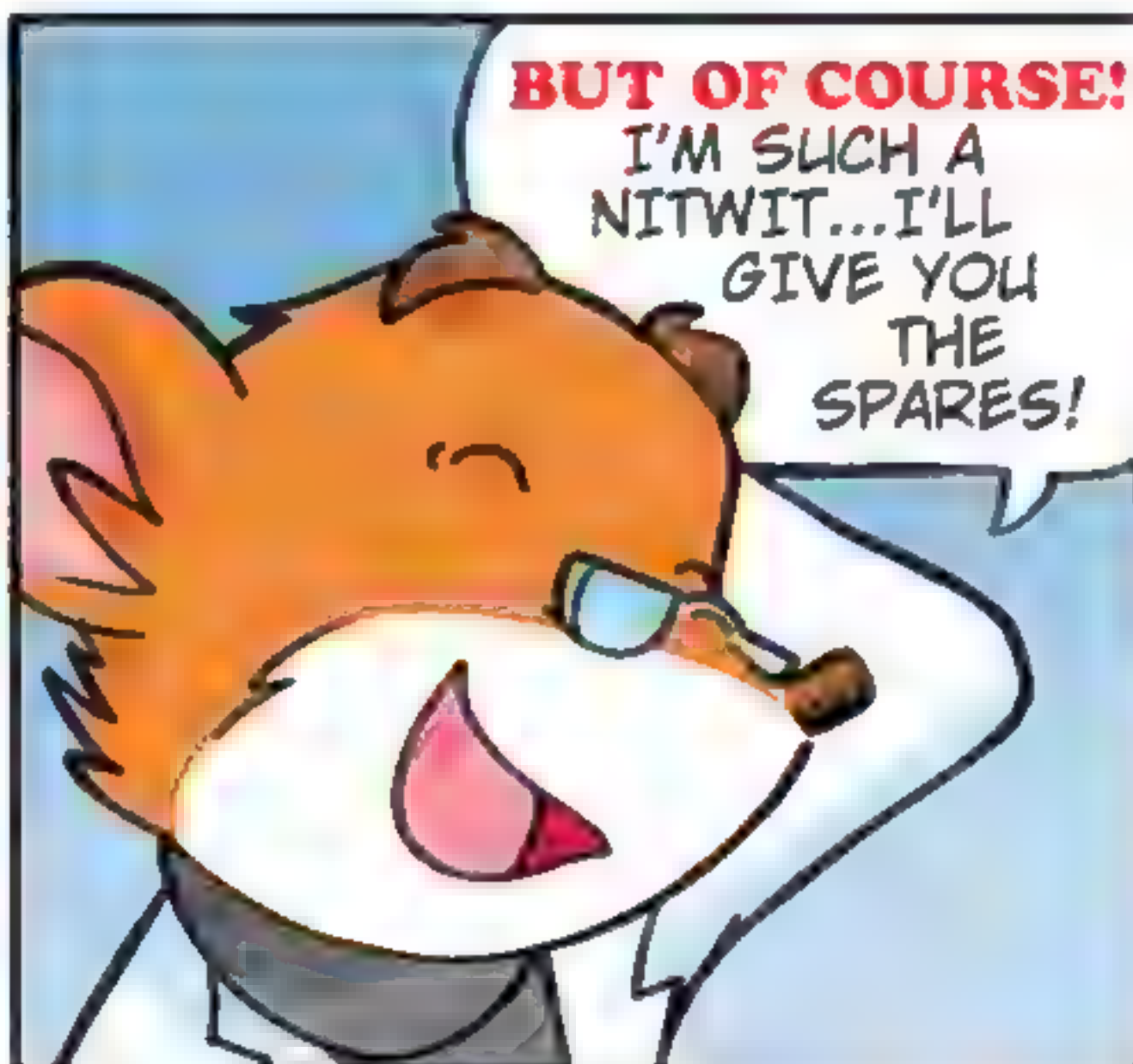
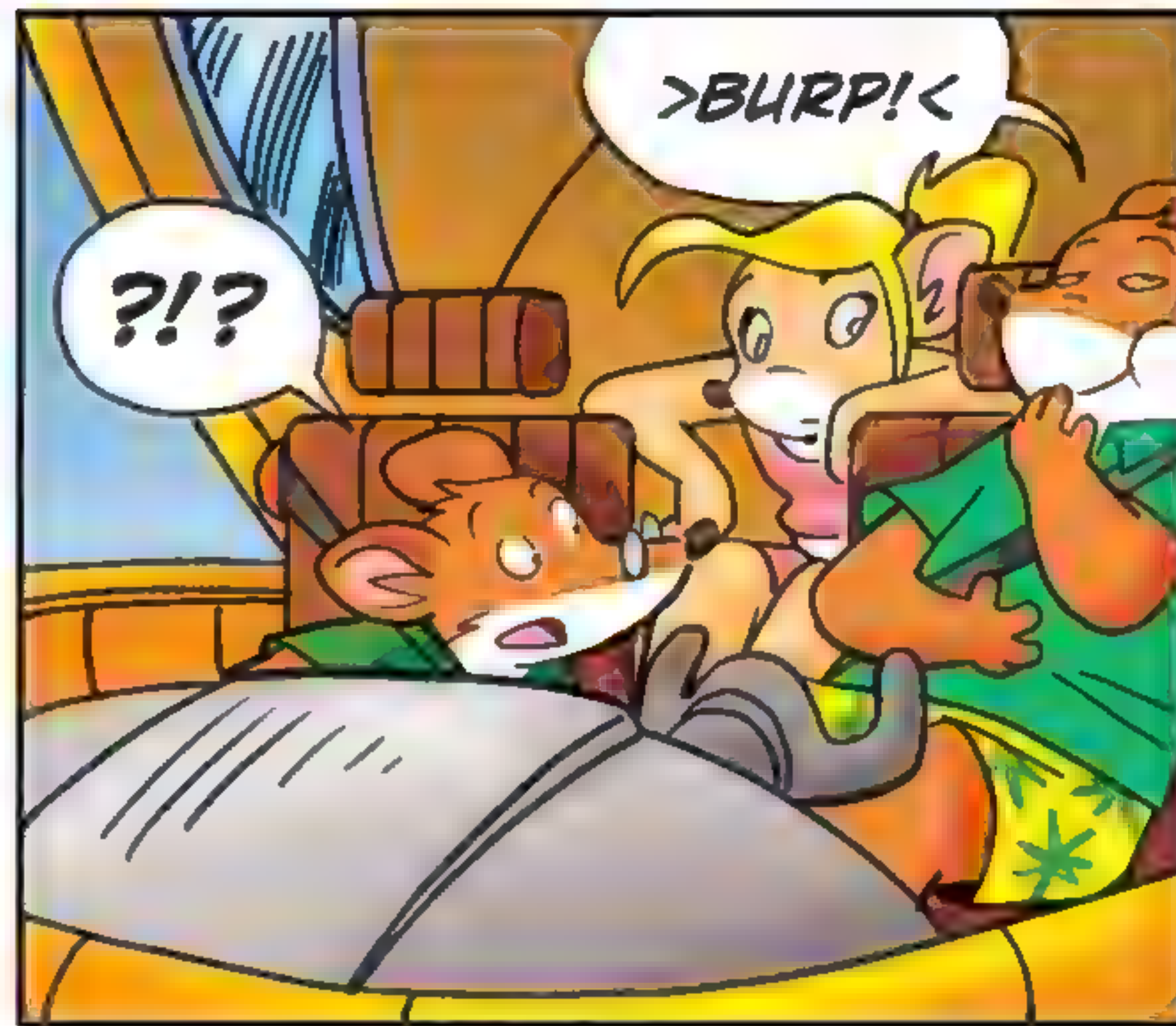
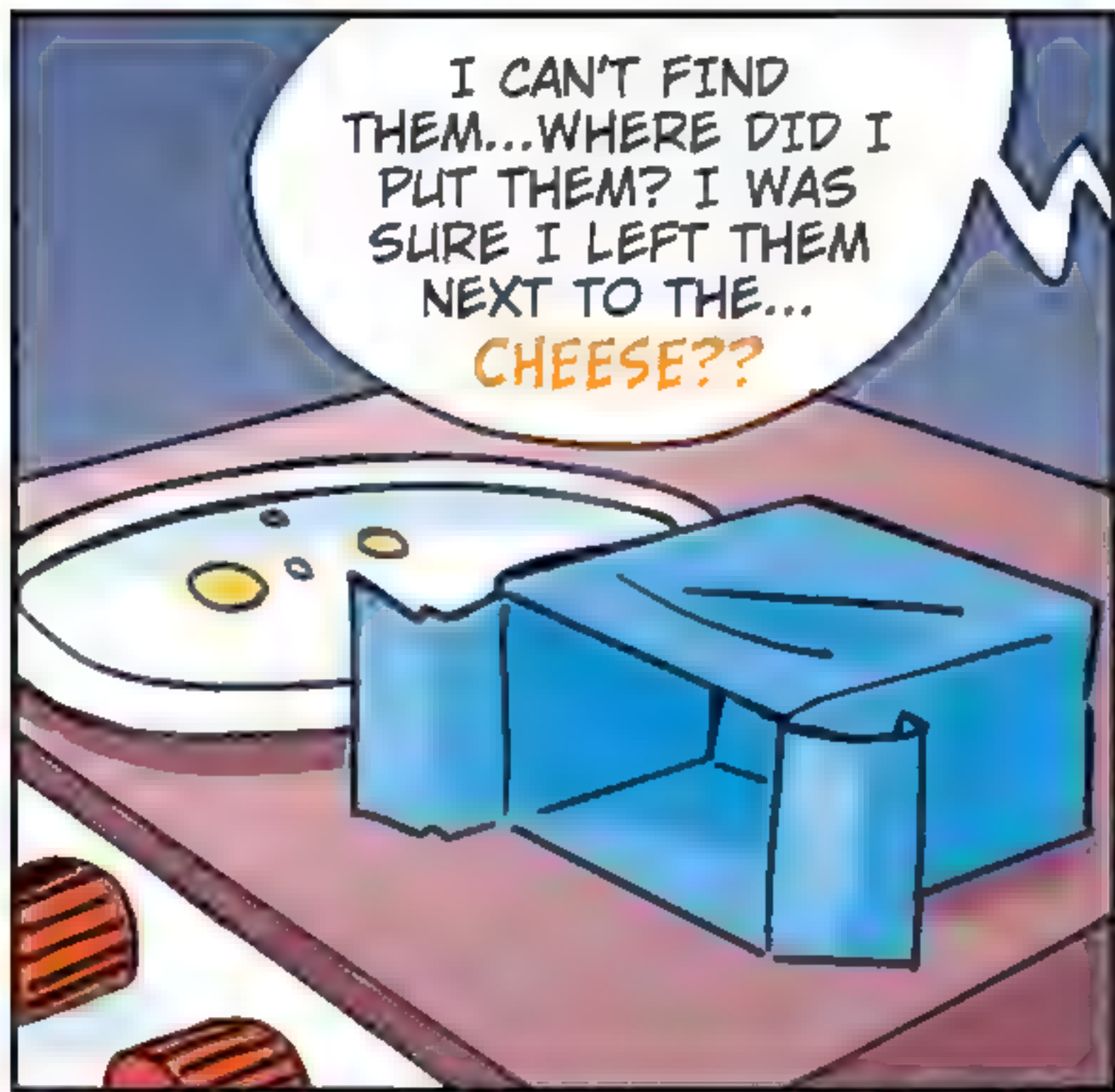
IS A NATION IN EAST ASIA. ITS TERRITORY HAS BEEN INHABITED BY HUMANS SINCE ANTIQUITY AND HAS MANY PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES. IT WASN'T UNTIL THE 3RD CENTURY B.C. THAT THE QIN DYNASTY UNIFIED THE DIFFERENT POPULATIONS THAT LIVED IN THE REGION AND CREATED THE FIRST CHINESE EMPIRE. CONSTRUCTION OF THE GREAT WALL BEGAN DURING THIS PERIOD. TODAY, CHINA IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD: ITS SURFACE AREA IS OVER NINE MILLION SQUARE KILOMETERS AND IT HAS OVER A BILLION INHABITANTS. ITS CAPITAL IS BEIJING, WHICH WAS CALLED KHANBALIK AT THE TIME OF OUR STORY.



MARCO POLO (1254-1324)

WAS BORN IN VENICE, ITALY, TO A FAMILY OF MERCHANTS. IN 1271, MARCO POLO LEFT FOR CHINA WITH HIS FATHER, NICCOLO, AND HIS UNCLE MATTEO. THERE THEY STAYED AT THE COURT OF THE MONGOLIAN EMPEROR, KUBLAI KHAN, WHO ENTRUSTED THEM WITH MANY COMMISSIONS AND DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS. AFTER 17 YEARS IN CHINA, MARCO RETURNED TO VENICE IN 1292 WITH HIS FAMILY AND RELATIVES. THE TALES OF HIS JOURNEY AND HIS STAY IN CHINA ARE COLLECTED IN THE BOOK, THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO.





*GOOD LUCK

MEANWHILE, CATARDONE III, RULER OF THE PIRATE CATS, HIS DAUGHTER, TERSILLA, AND THEIR ASSISTANT, BONZO, HAD ARRIVED IN CHINA, IN THE YEAR 1292...

TERSILLA,
DO YOU THINK IT
WOULD BE GOOD
TO HIDE THE CATJET
IN THE VICINITY
OF THE GREAT
WALL?

THE GREAT WALL
WAS BEGUN IN THE THIRD
CENTURY B.C. BY EMPEROR QIN
SHI HUANG TO PROTECT
CHINA FROM INVASIONS
BY THE VARIOUS NOMADIC
TRIBES WHO CAME FROM
OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY.
IT'S MORE THAN 6,000
KILOMETERS TALL--
BETWEEN 5 AND 10
METERS LONG--AND
WIDE ENOUGH FOR
CARTS TO DRIVE ON
LIKE A ROAD.

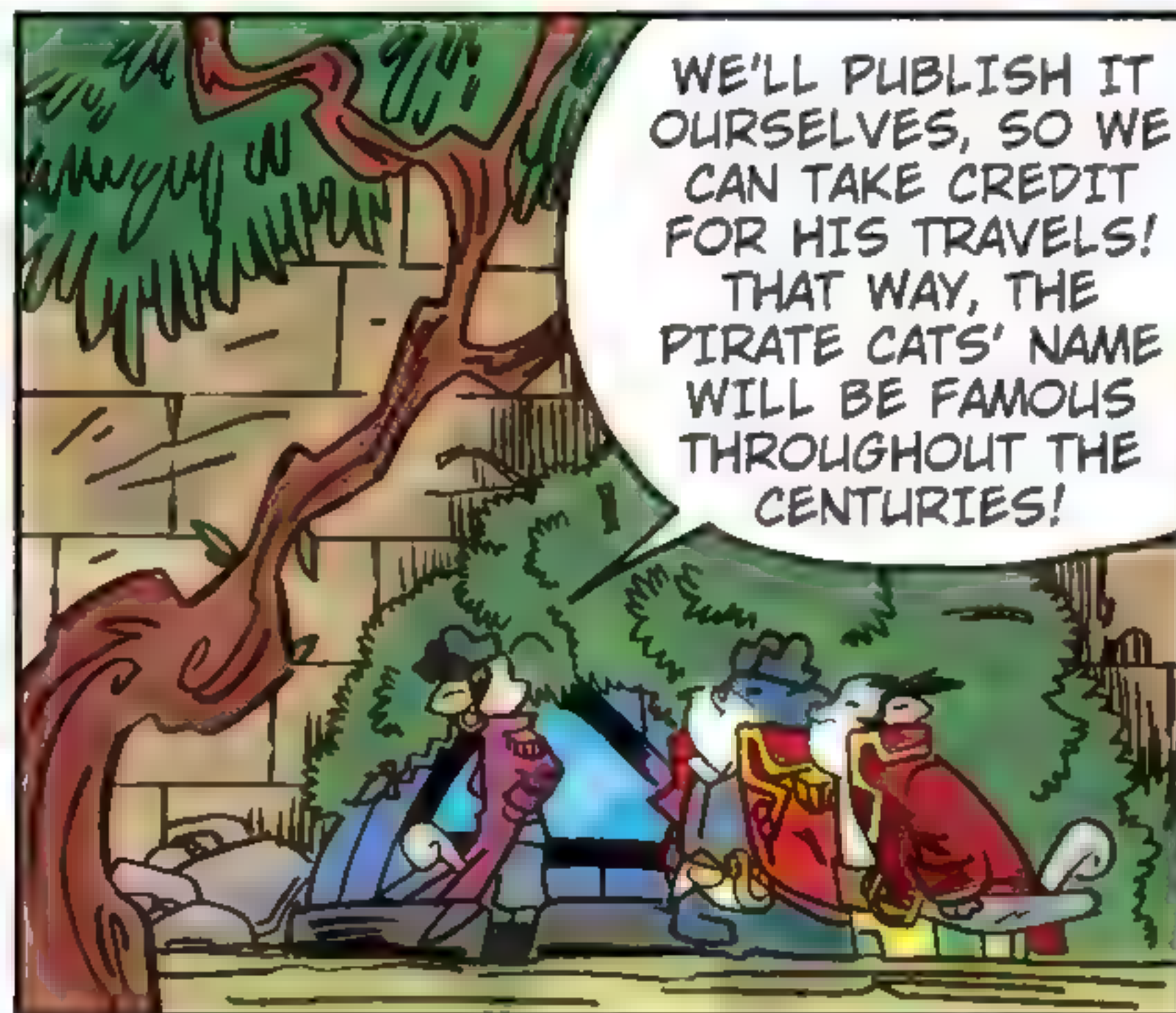
YES, THAT'S AN EXCELLENT
HIDING PLACE! PLUS, WE'RE
JUST A FEW KILOMETERS
FROM KHANBALIK, THE
CAPITAL OF
THE EMPIRE!

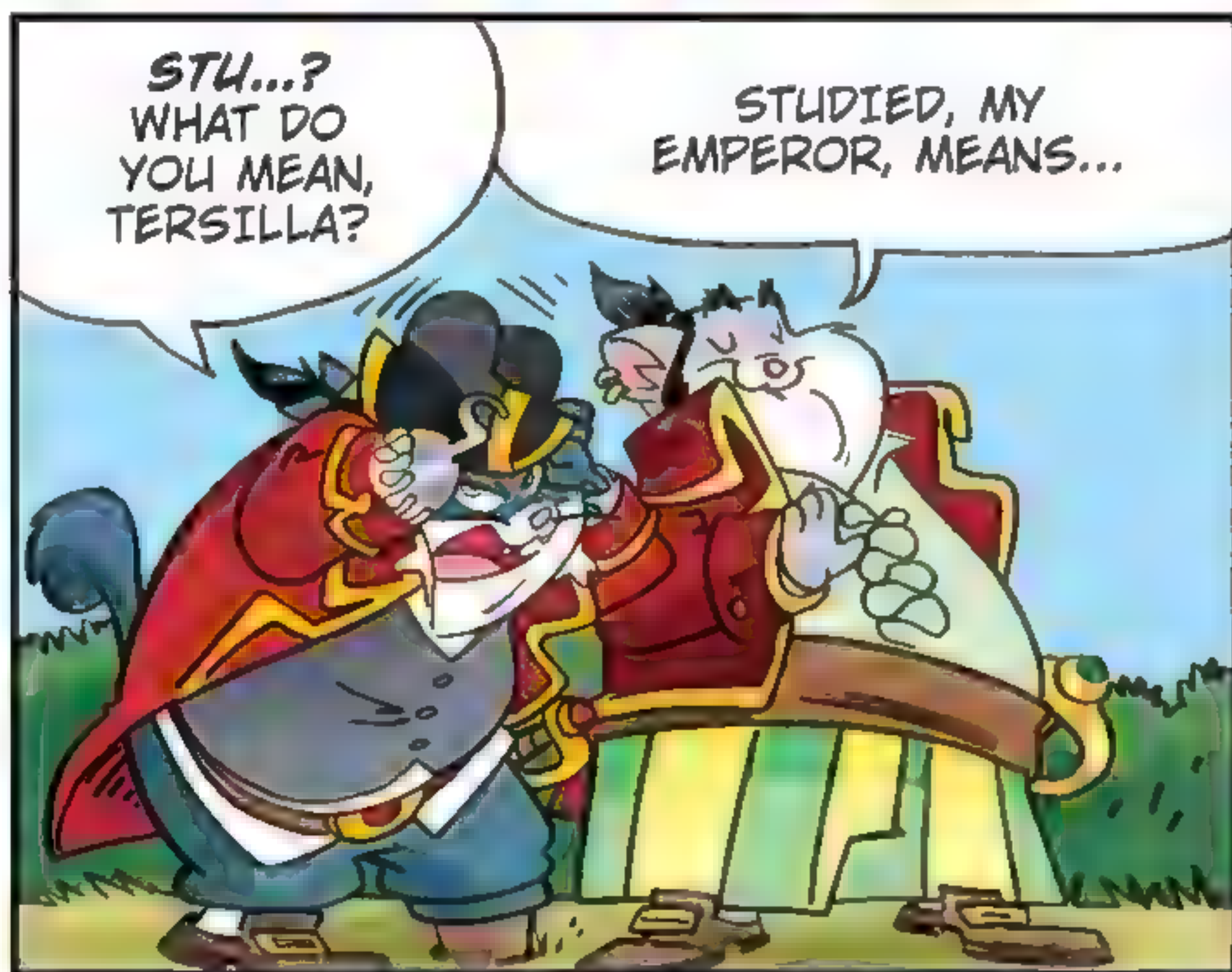
CATJET

I THOUGHT THE
GREAT WALL WAS
ALWAYS FULL OF
TOURISTS!

IT WILL BE IN THE
FUTURE, DADDY DEAR,
BUT AS YOU SEE, IT'S
DESERTED AT THE
MOMENT.


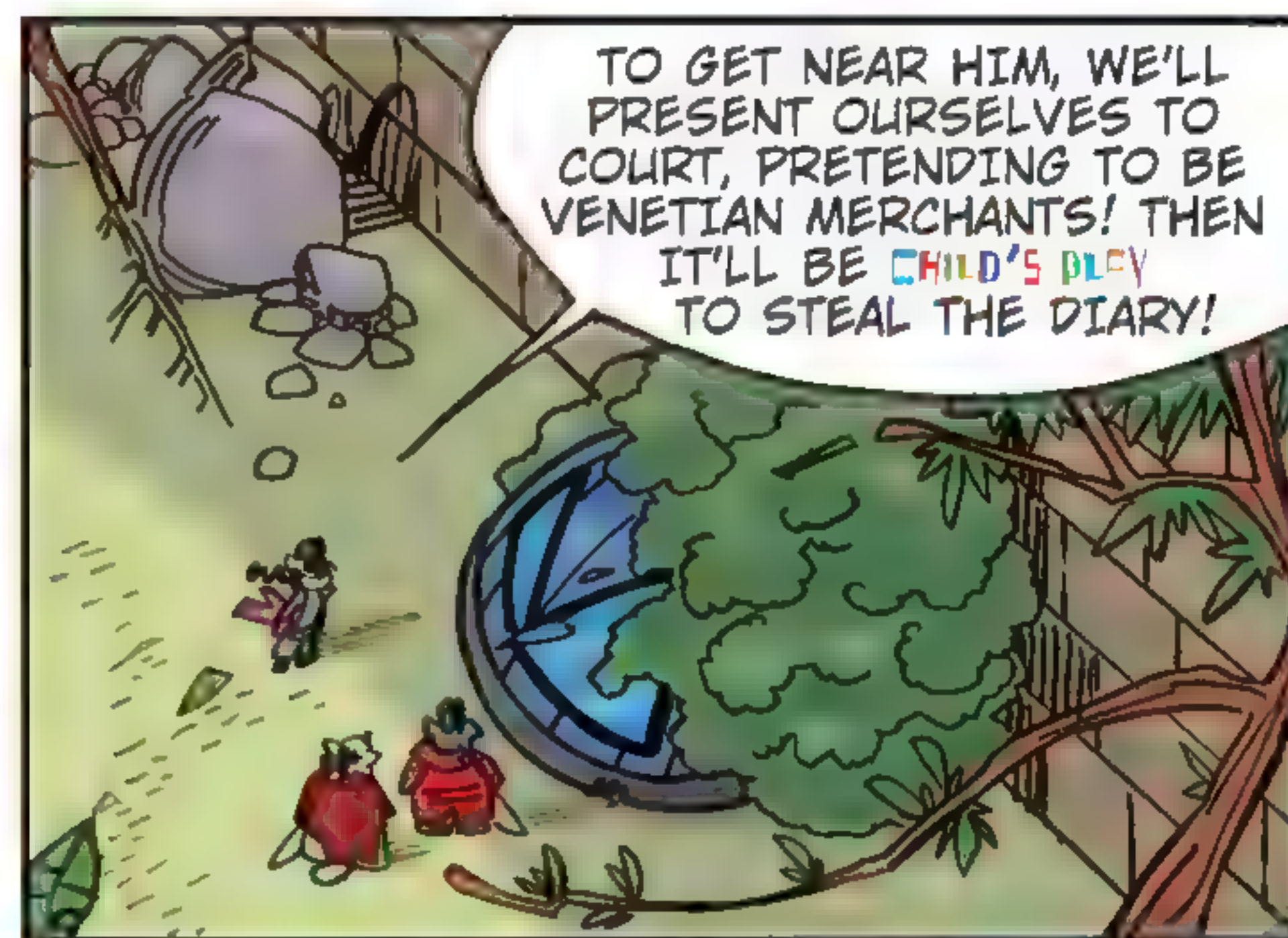
BUT OF
COURSE, I
GET IT...WE
RETURNED TO
THE PAST TO
BOOST TOURISM
AT THE
GREAT WALL!





MONGOLIANS

MONGOLIANS WERE A NOMADIC WARRIOR PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN VARIOUS REGIONS OF CENTRAL ASIA. IN THE EARLY 1200S, THE FAMOUS LEADER GENGHIS KHAN (AROUND 1167-1227) SUCCEEDED IN UNIFYING THE DIFFERENT TRIBES AND BEGAN A WAR OF CONQUEST THAT LED THEM TO OCCUPY THE MAJORITY OF THE CONTINENT OF ASIA, CREATING THE GREATEST EMPIRE HISTORY HAS EVER RECORDED. AFTER GENGHIS KHAN'S DEATH, THE EMPIRE CONTINUED TO EXIST, LASTING UNTIL 1336. TODAY THE DESCENDANTS OF THE MONGOLIAN PEOPLE LIVE IN MONGOLIA, A NATION ON THE BORDER OF CHINA.

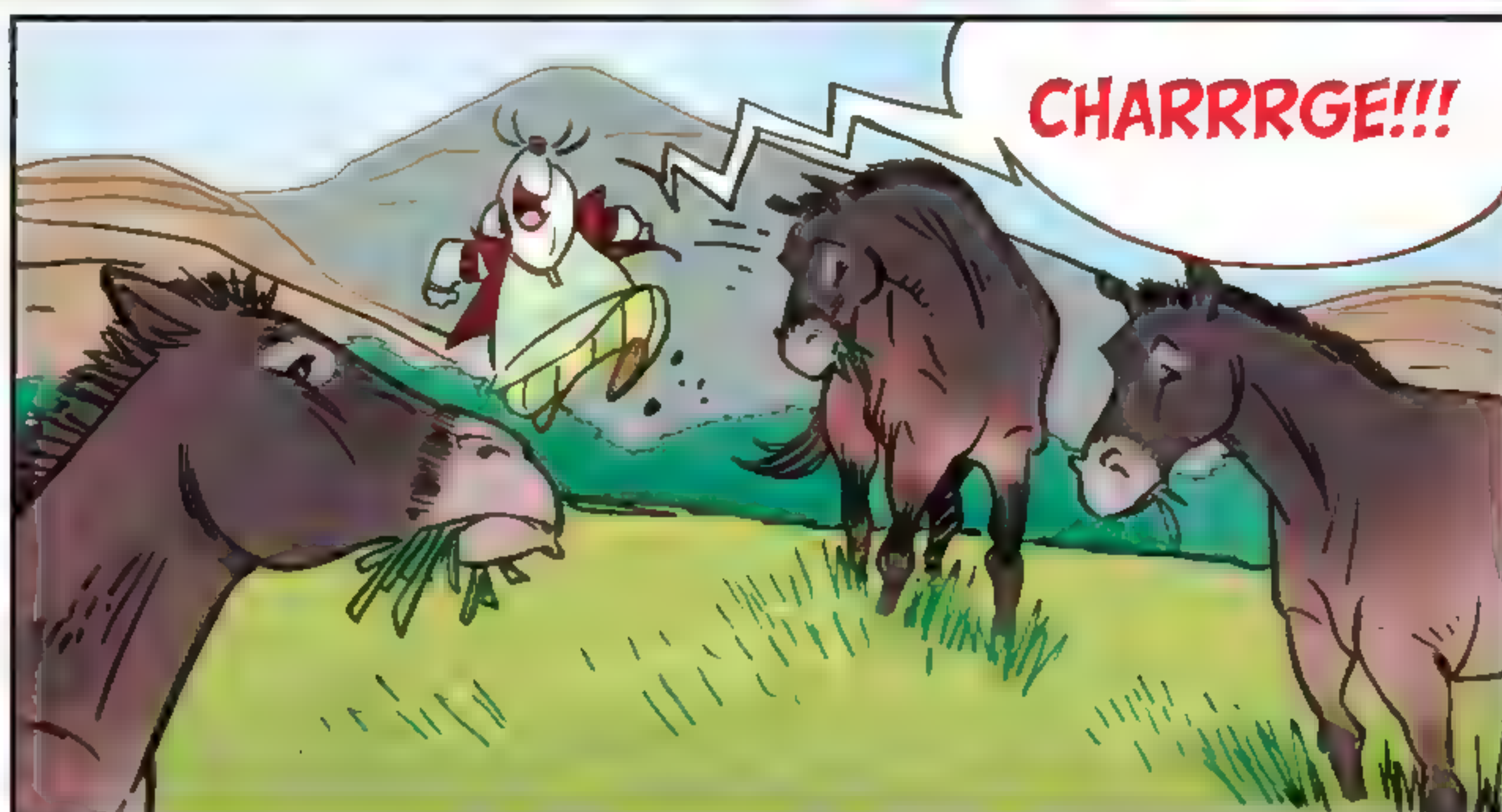
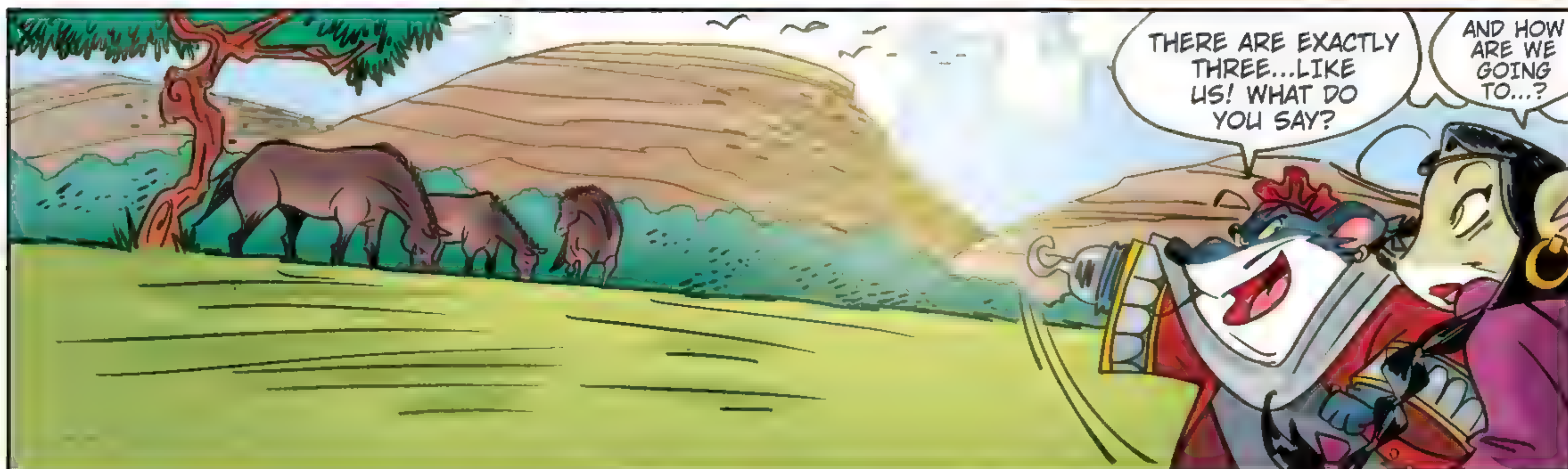



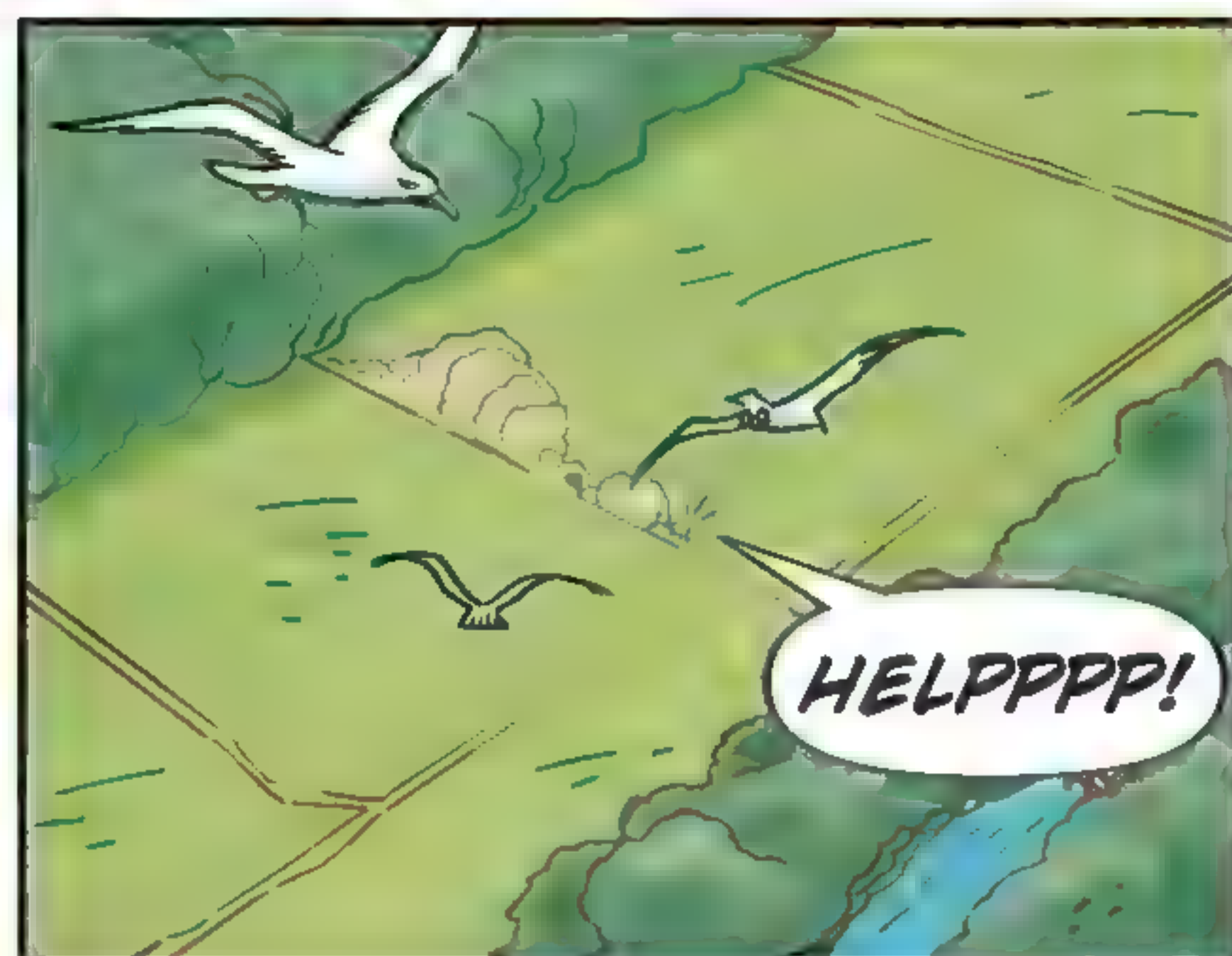
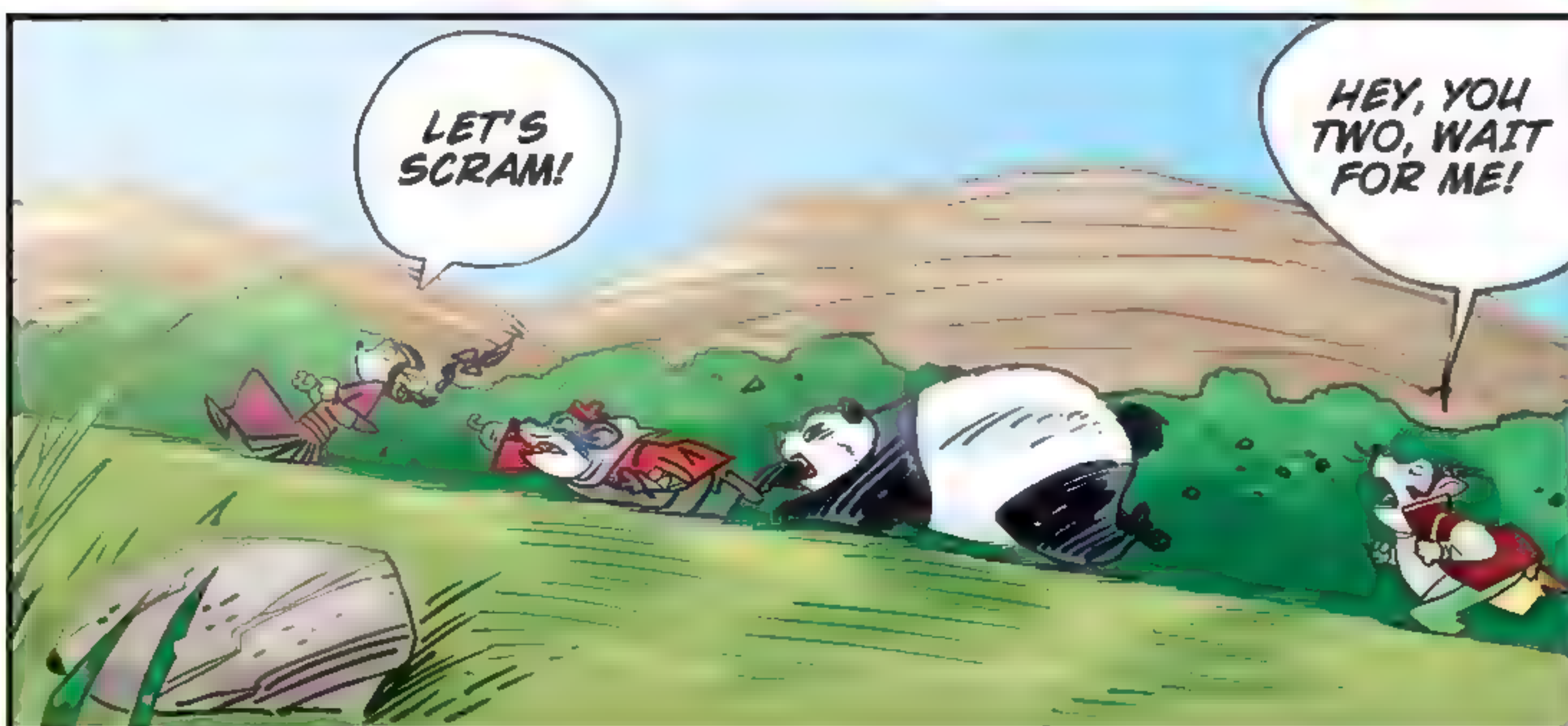
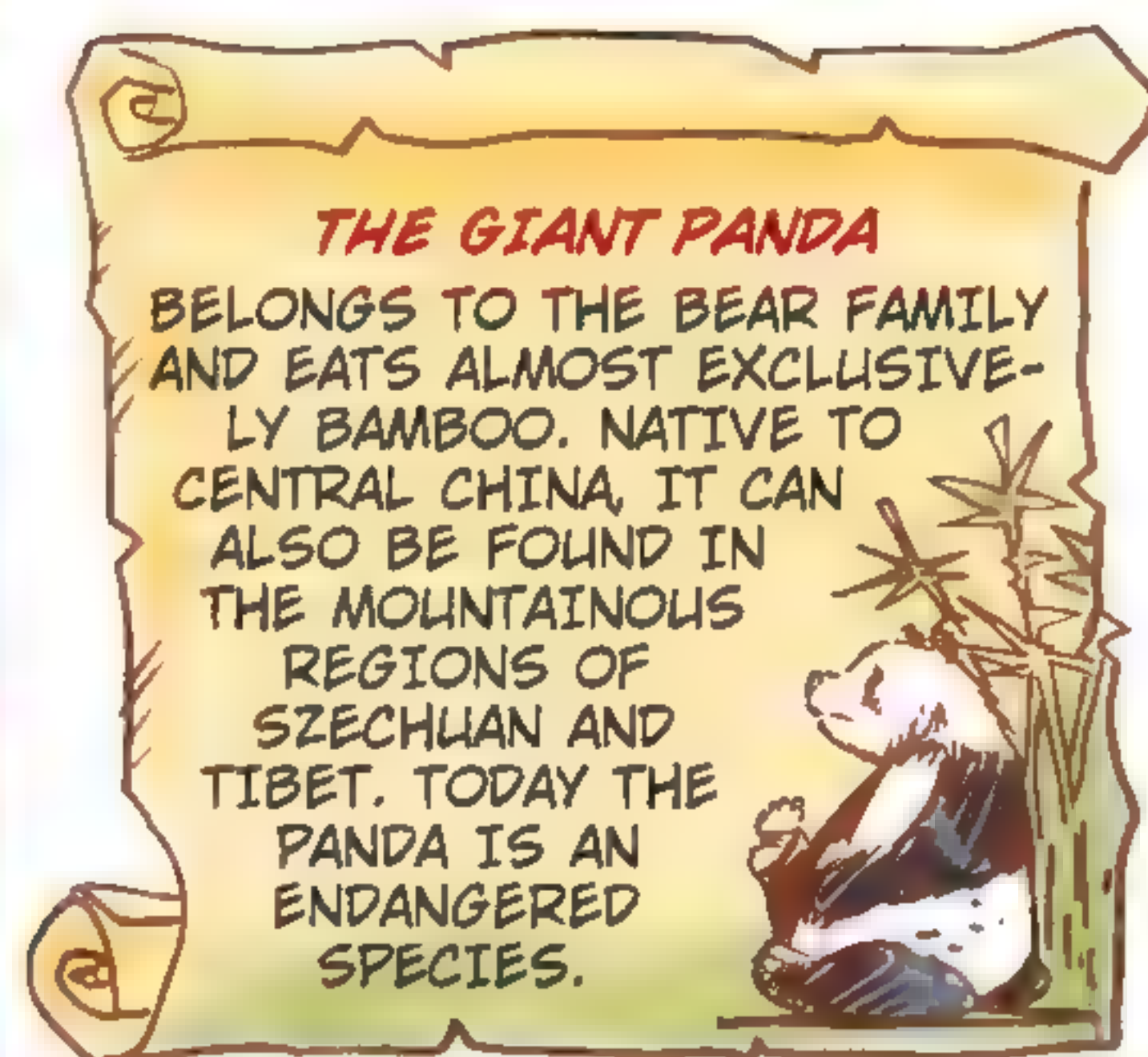
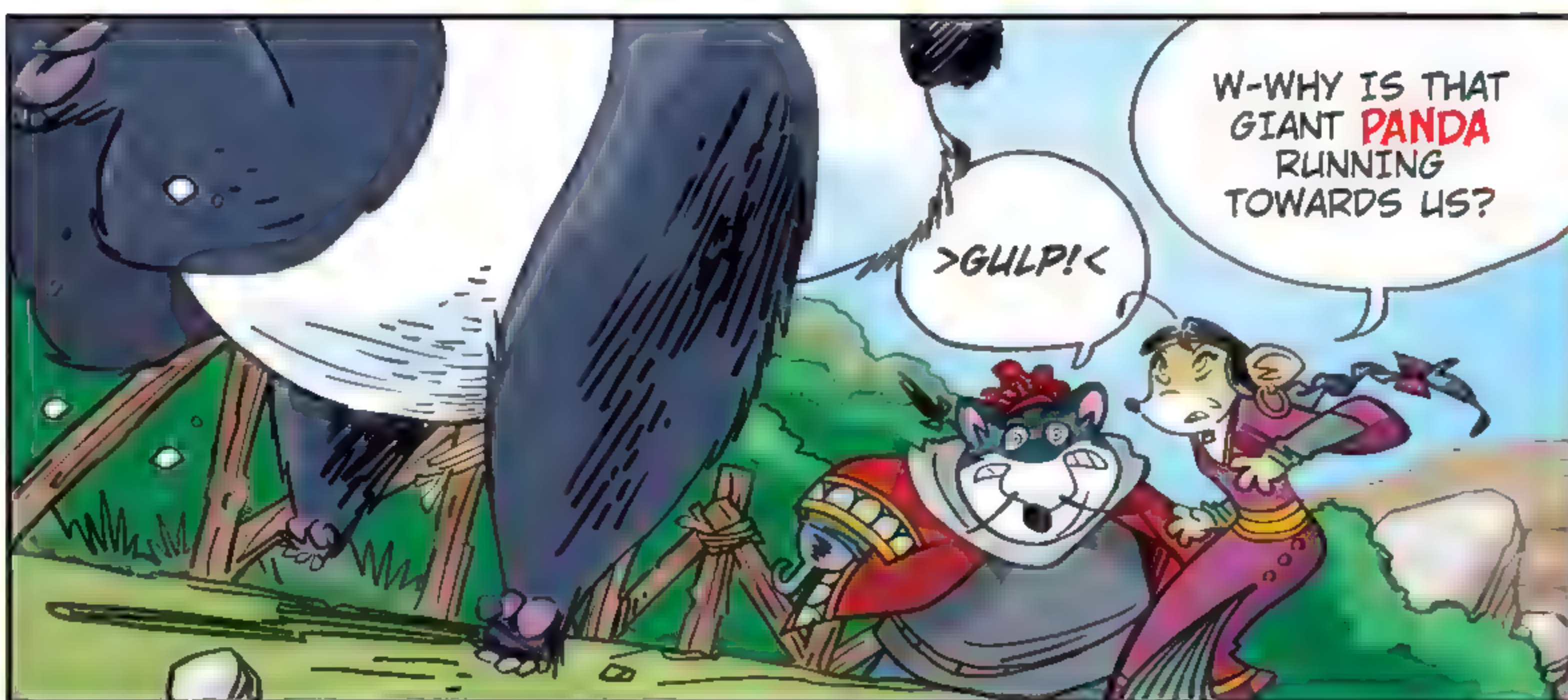
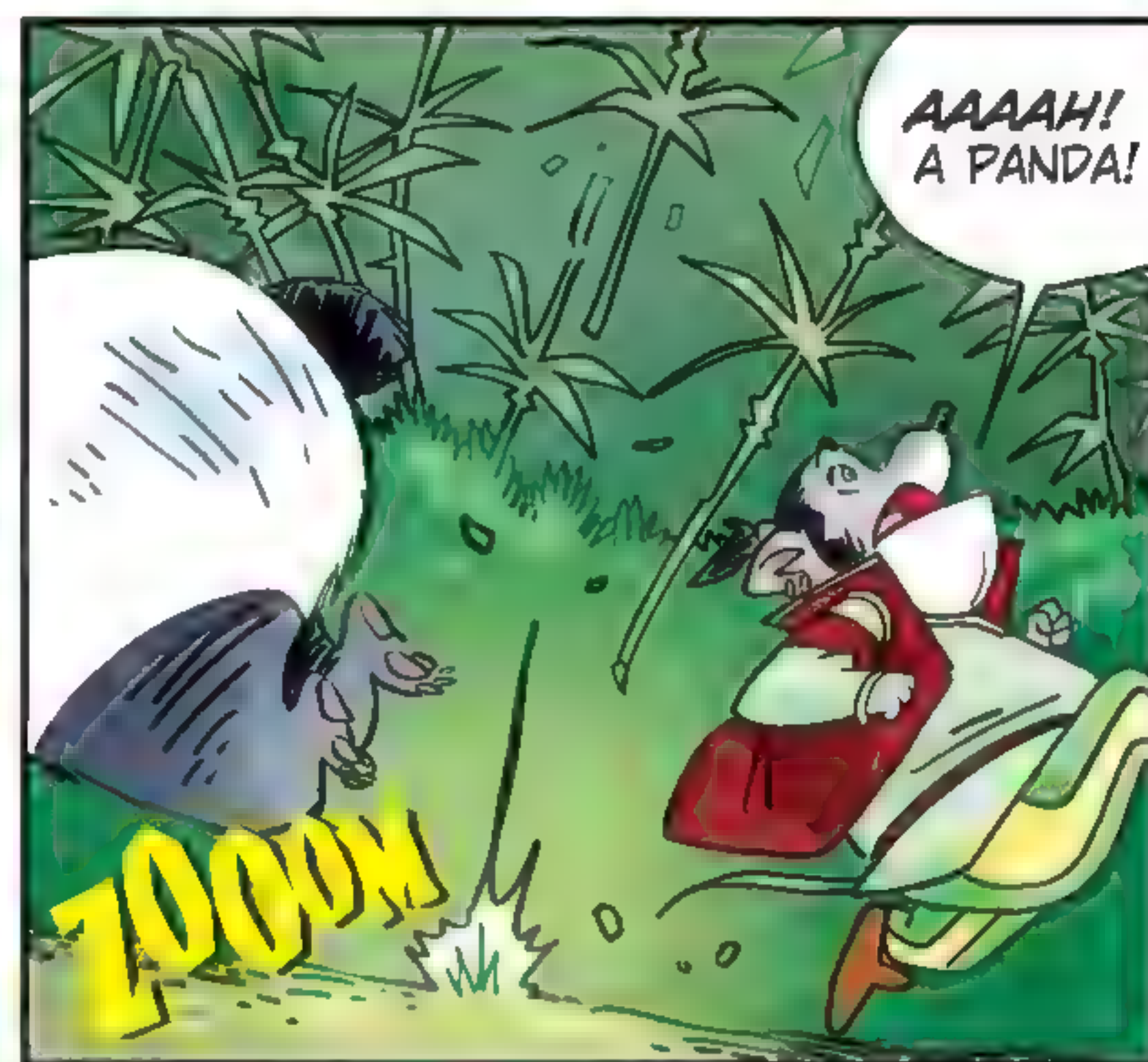
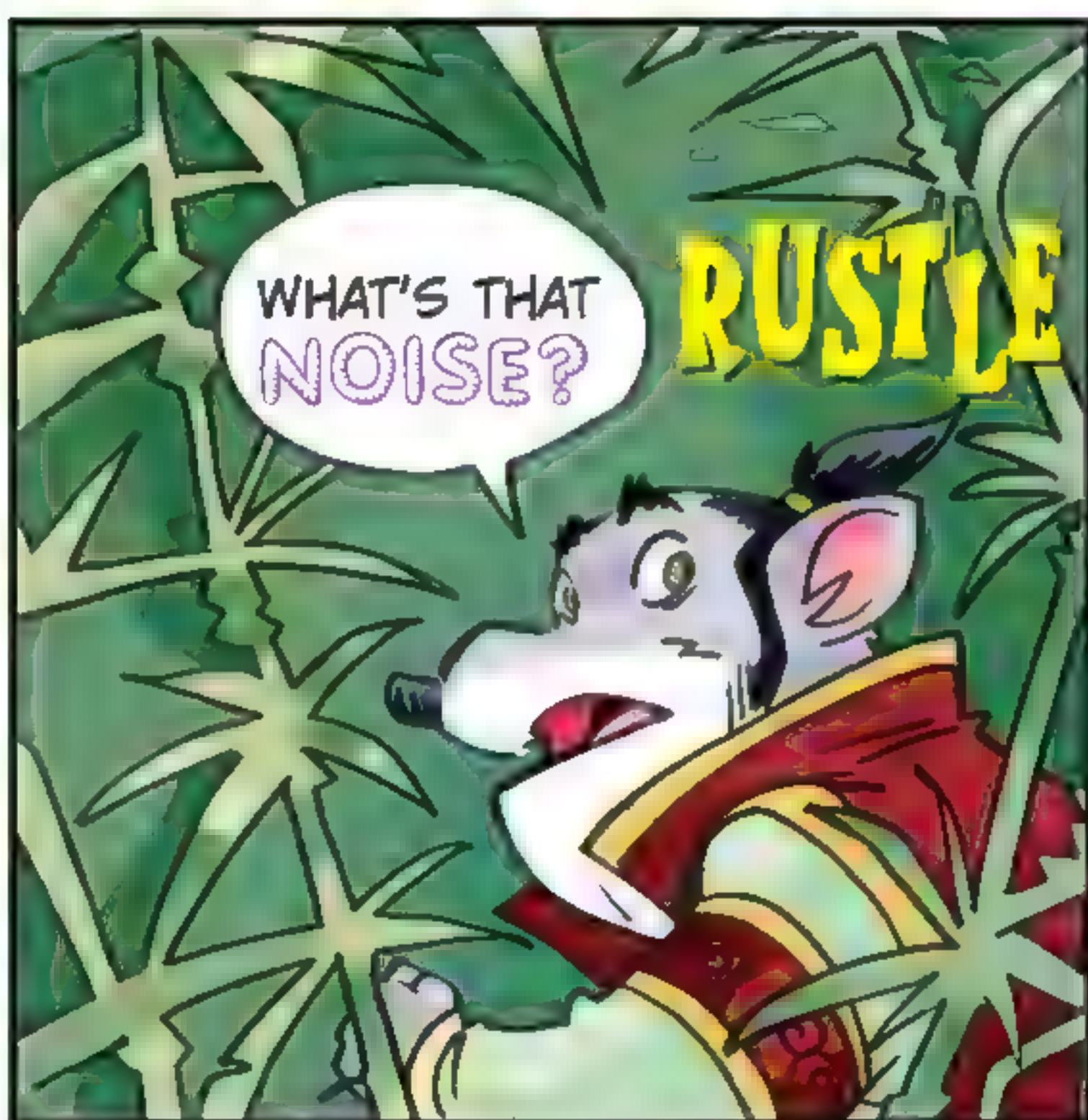
A LITTLE LATER, ON THE WAY TO KHANBALIK...



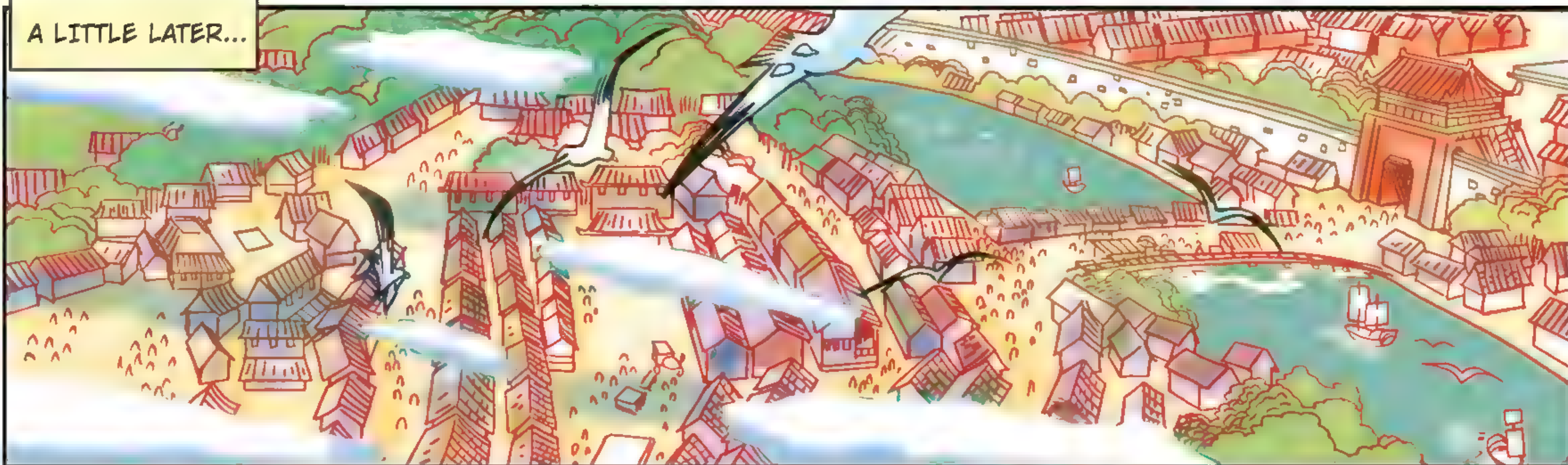
PRZEWALSKI'S HORSES

ARE A TYPE OF HORSE NATIVE TO MONGOLIA. THEY HAVE A MASSIVE HEAD, WITH SMALL EYES AND EARS, A SQUAT BODY AND A SHORT BRISTLY MANE. THEIR LEGS AND MUZZLES ARE DARKER THAN THE REST OF THEIR BODIES. THE PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THIS HORSE HAVE STAYED THE SAME FROM PREHISTORY TO OUR TIME.



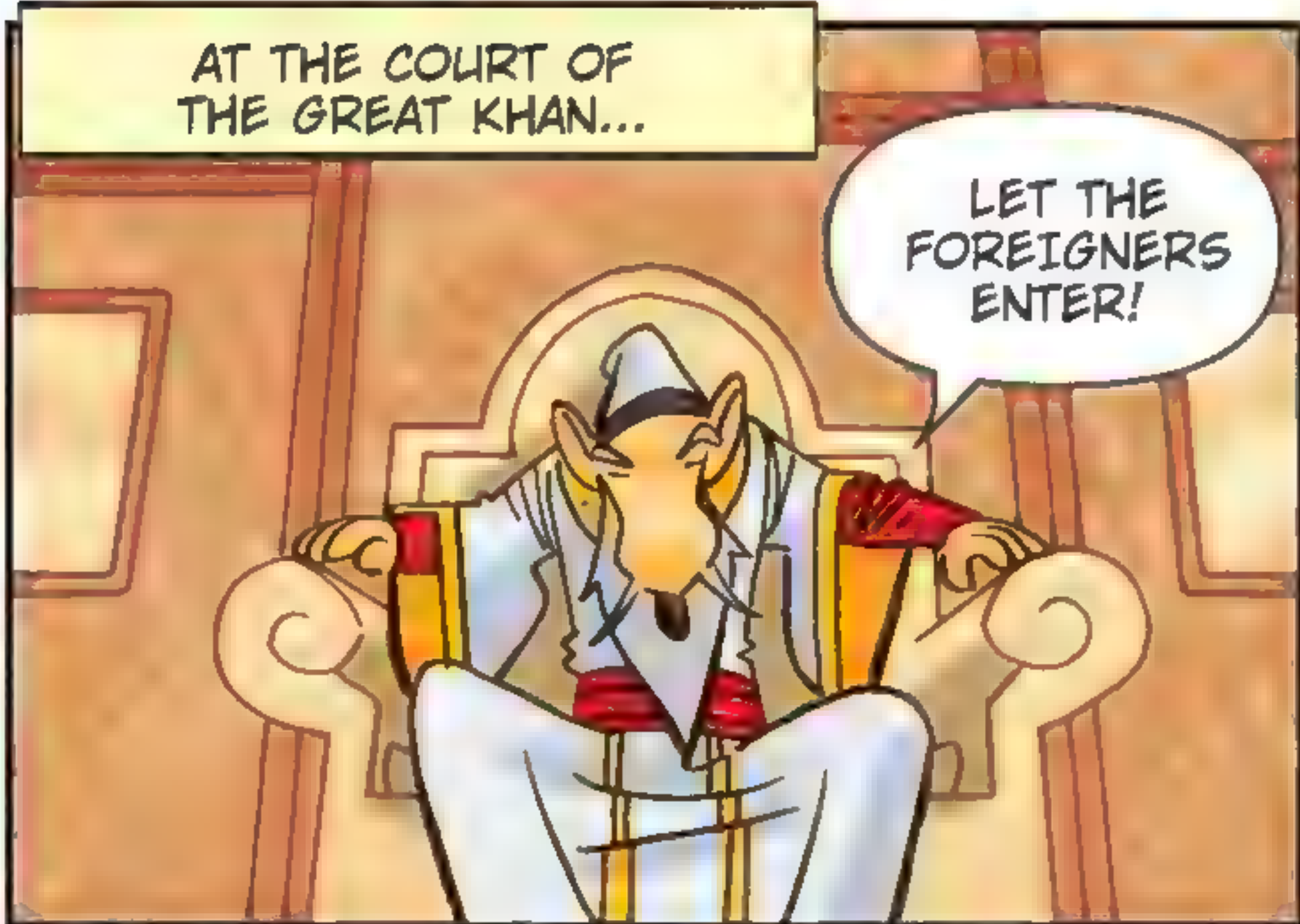


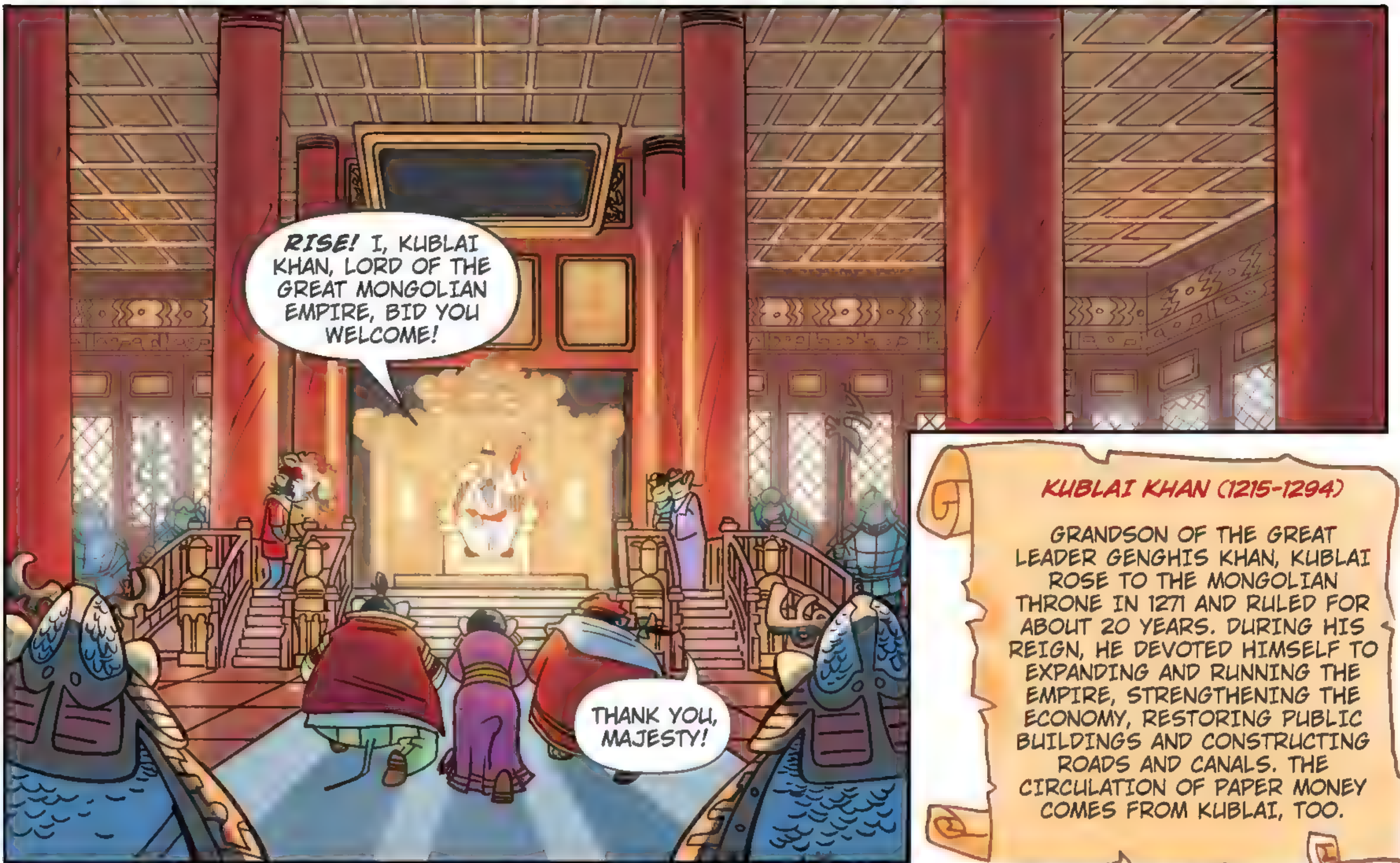
A LITTLE LATER...



**KHANBALIK
(THE CITY OF KHAN)**

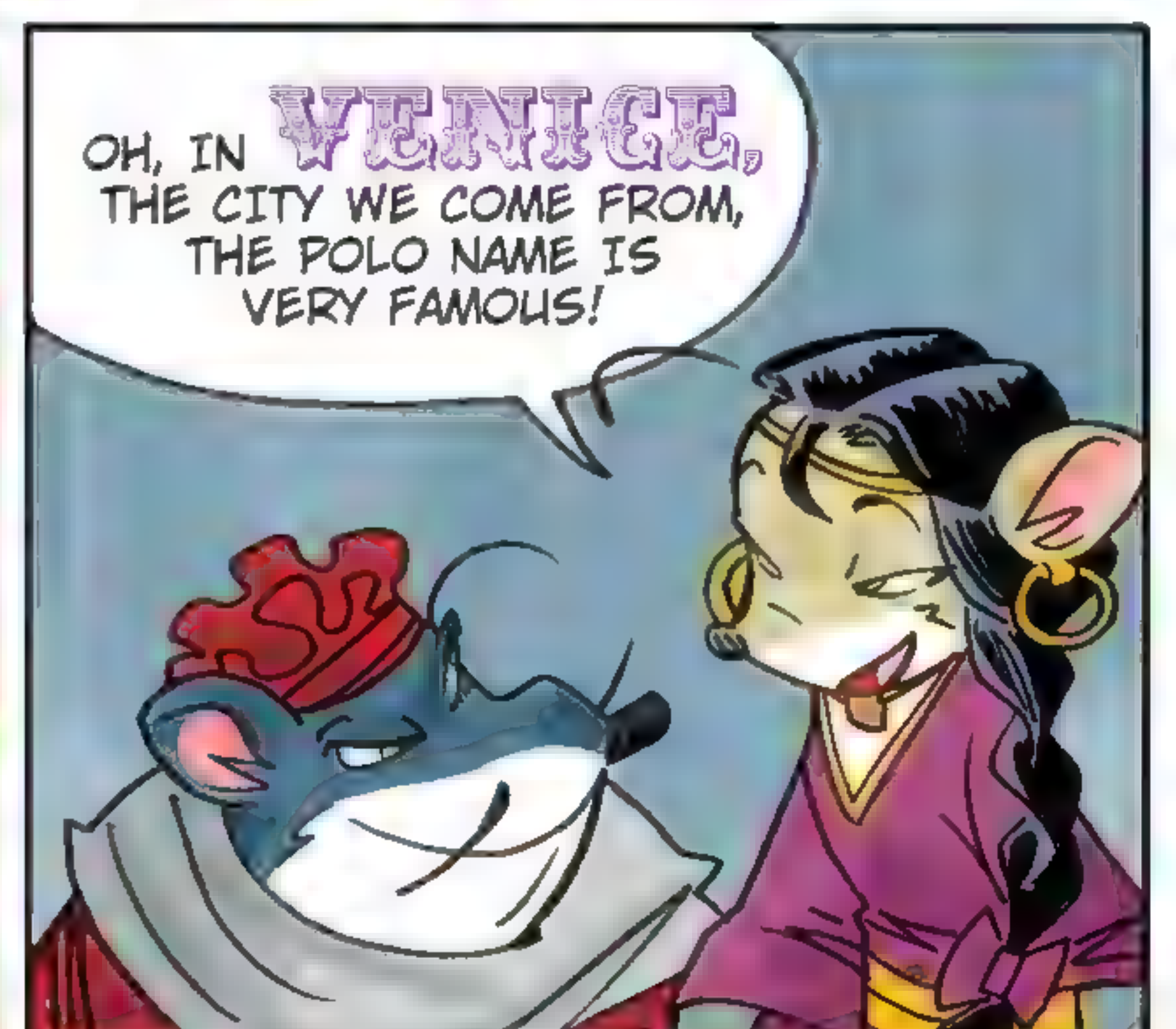
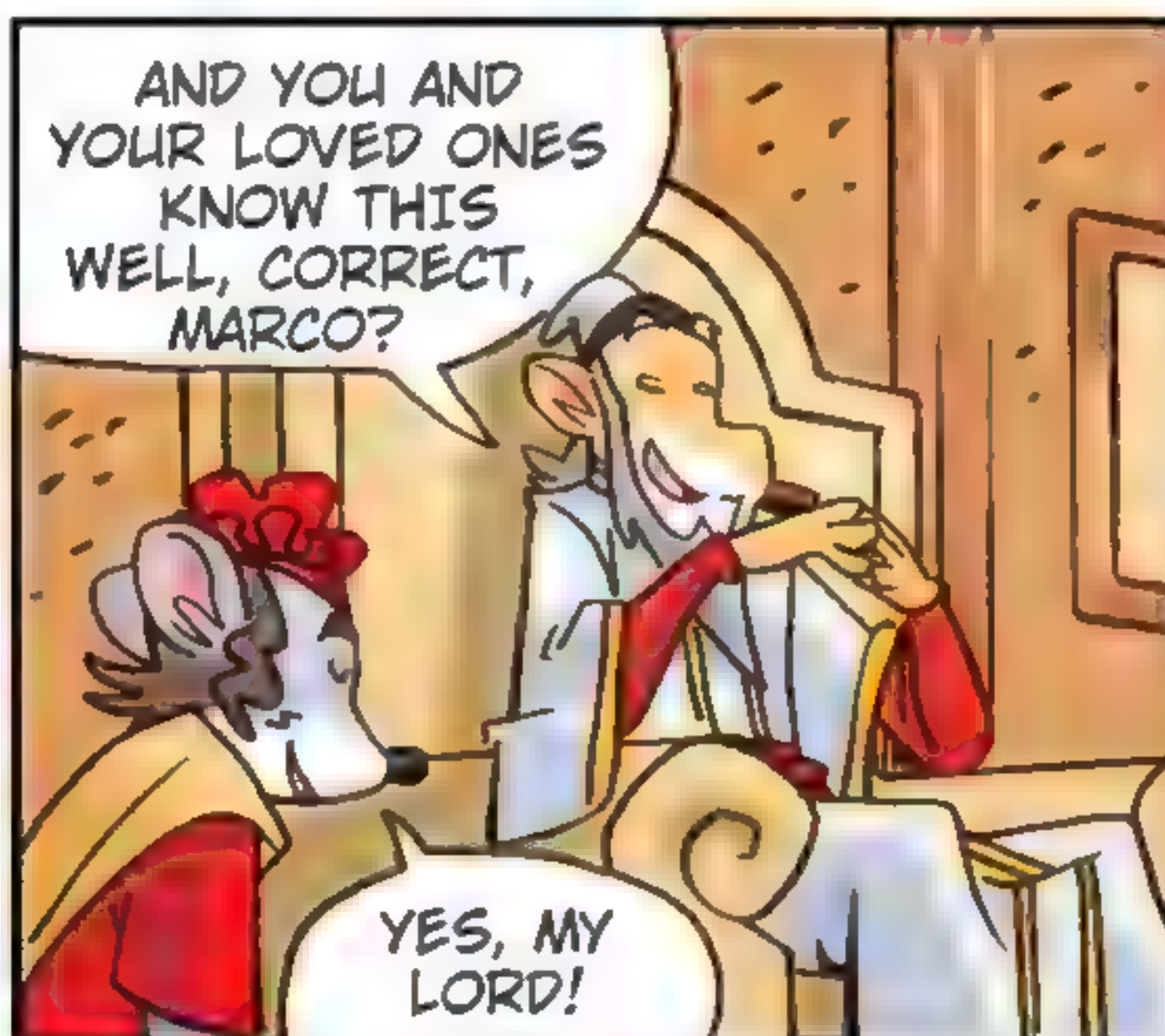
WAS THE MONGOLIAN NAME USED FOR THE CITY THAT TODAY WE CALL BEIJING. THE FIRST CITY CENTER DATES BACK TO THE 5TH CENTURY B.C. AND WAS FORMED FROM A GROUP OF SMALL VILLAGES. OVER TIME, THE CITY GREW IN IMPORTANCE UNTIL THE MONGOLS CHOSE IT AS THE CAPITAL OF THEIR EMPIRE IN 1267.

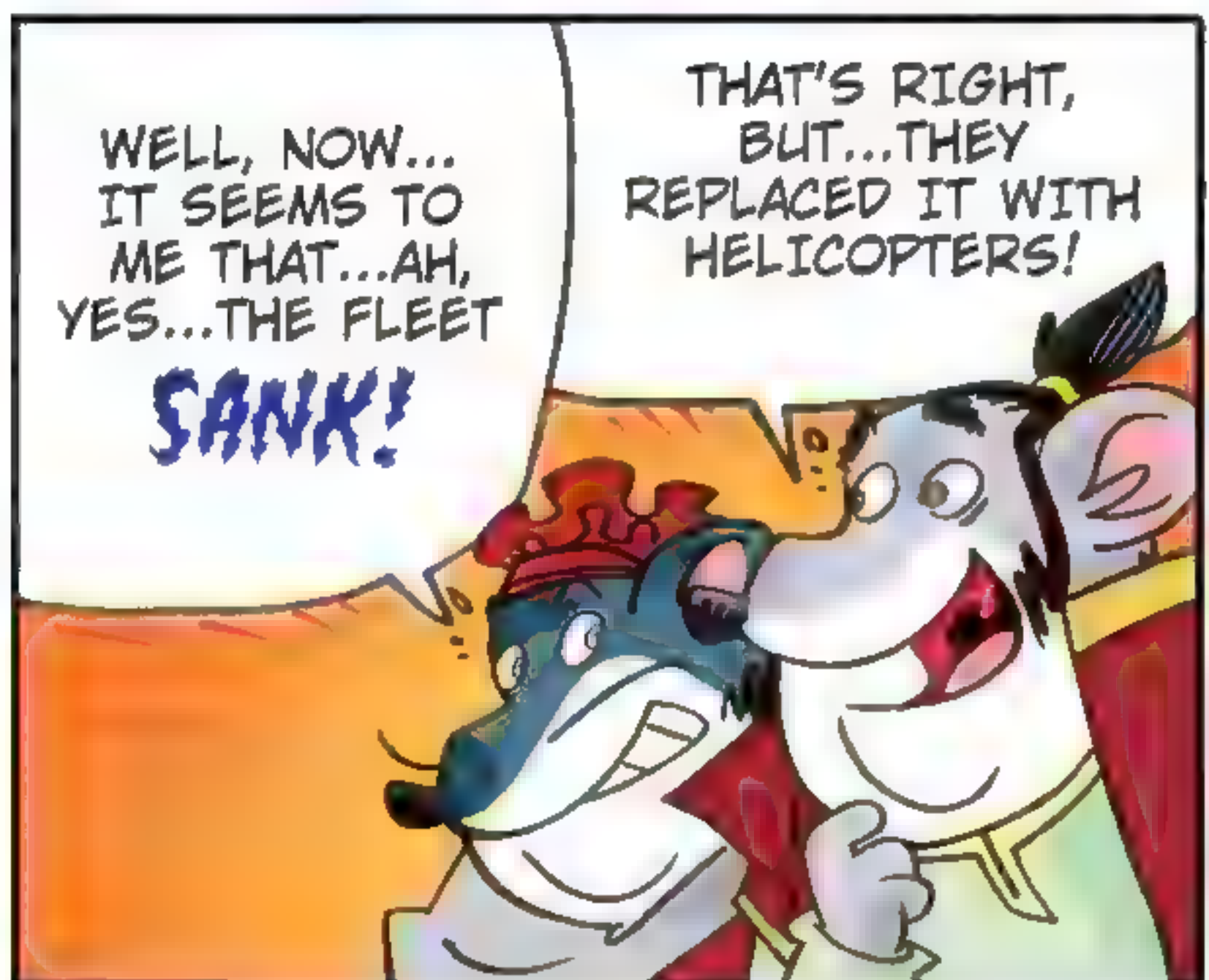
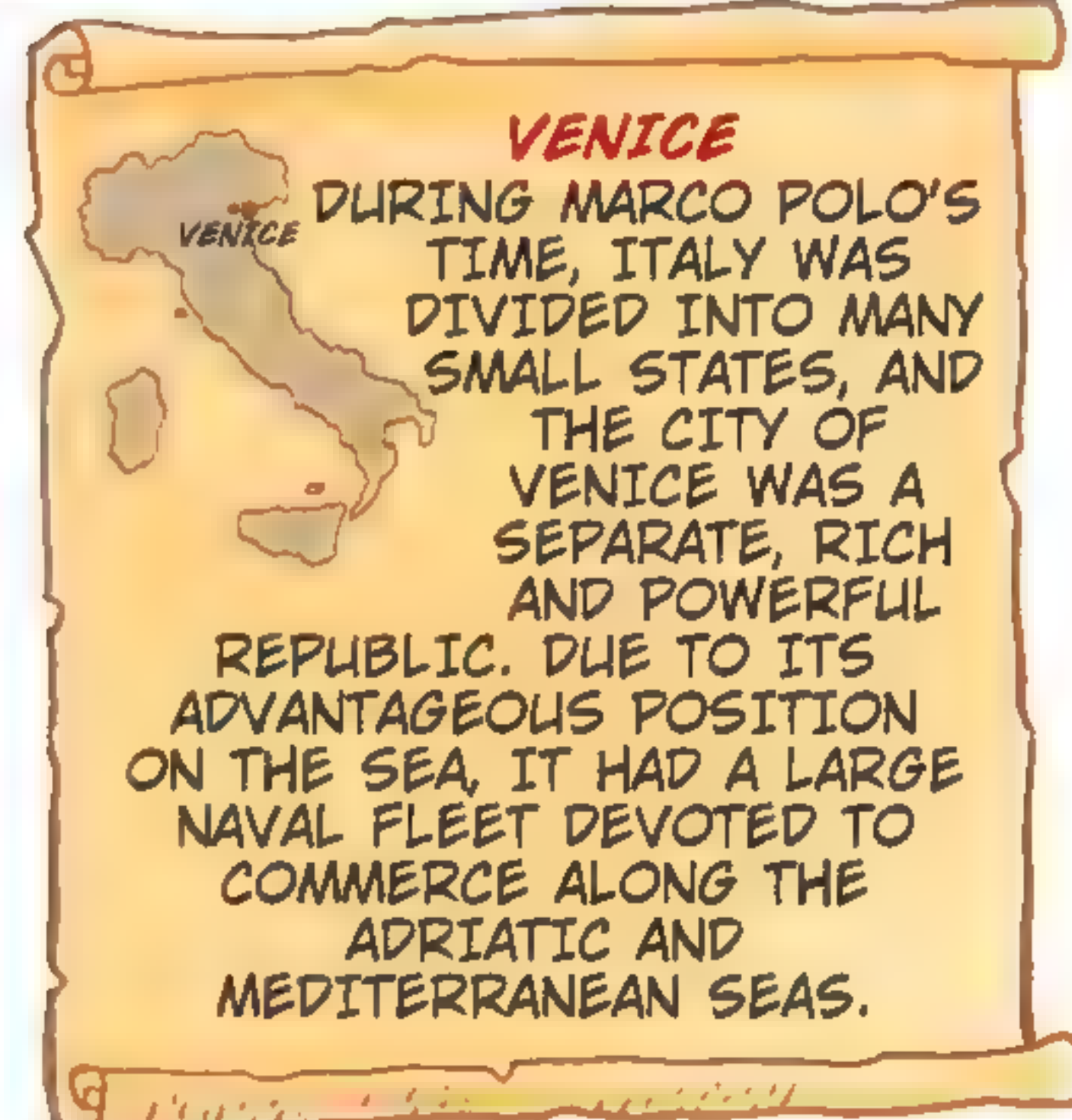
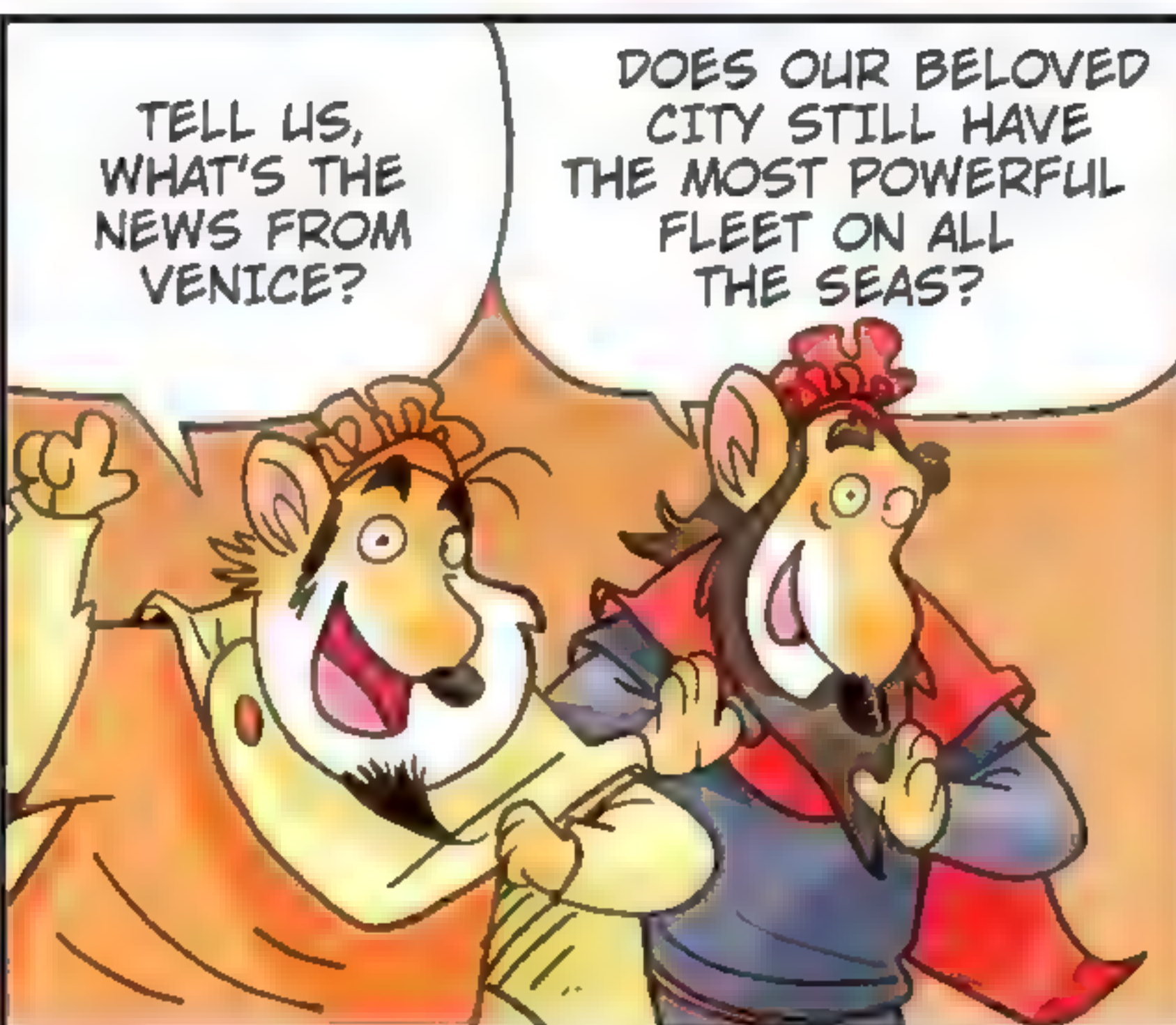




KUBLAI KHAN (1215-1294)

GRANDSON OF THE GREAT LEADER GENGHIS KHAN, KUBLAI ROSE TO THE MONGOLIAN THRONE IN 1271 AND RULED FOR ABOUT 20 YEARS. DURING HIS REIGN, HE DEVOTED HIMSELF TO EXPANDING AND RUNNING THE EMPIRE, STRENGTHENING THE ECONOMY, RESTORING PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTING ROADS AND CANALS. THE CIRCULATION OF PAPER MONEY COMES FROM KUBLAI, TOO.





AT EXACTLY THE SAME MOMENT,
NOT FAR FROM KHANBALIK...

VRRROOOOMM

BRAKE, TRAP!
WE'RE GOING TO
HIT SOMETHING!

I'M
TRYING!

WHRRRRR

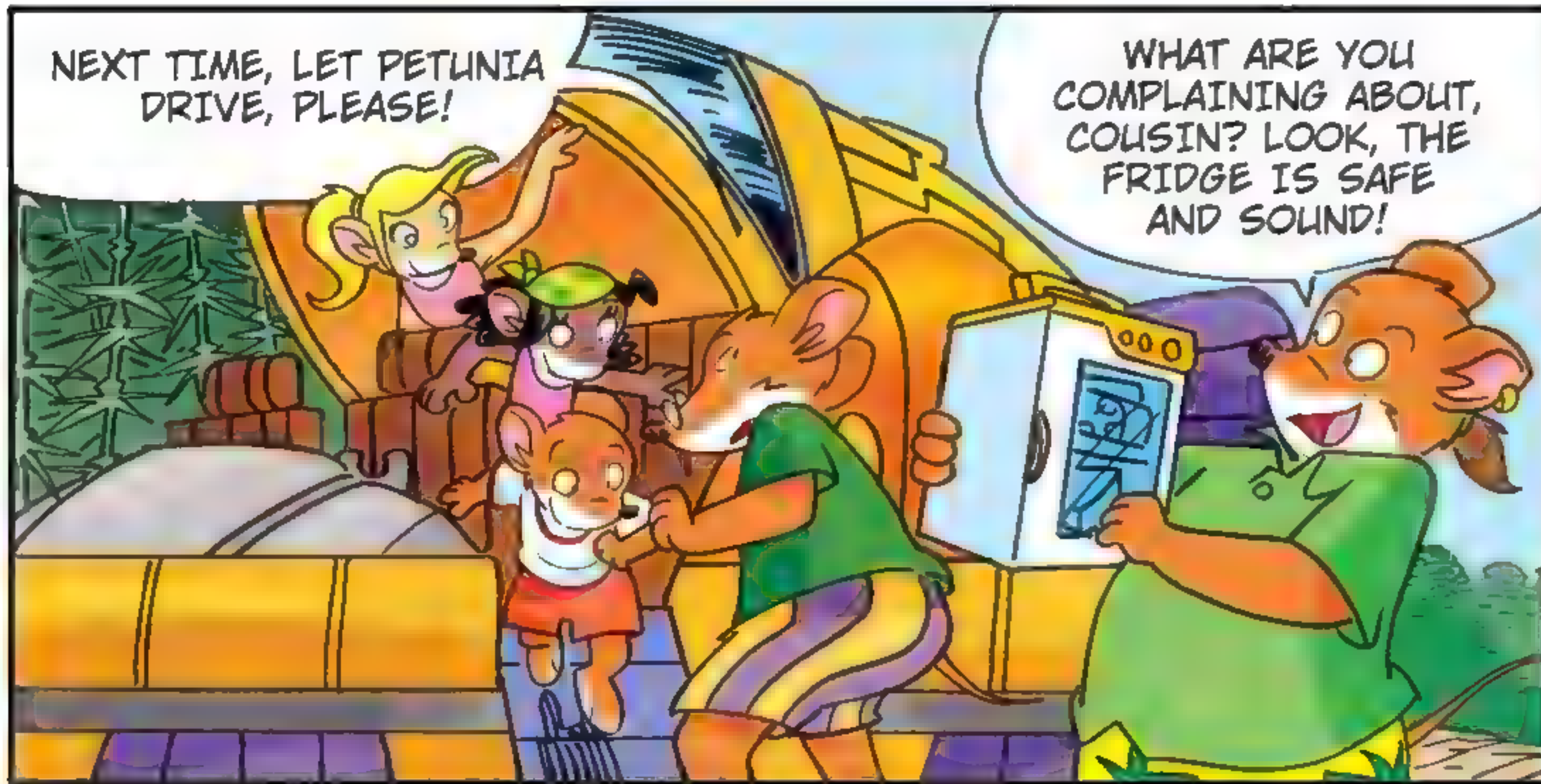
THE RICE PADDIES!
THE RICE PADDIES!

BABOOOMM

SKREEECH

DID YOU SEE THAT
PERFECT LANDING?
YOU DIDN'T
NEED TO GET
ALL WORKED
UP!

>SIGH<



NEXT TIME, LET PETUNIA DRIVE, PLEASE!

WHAT ARE YOU COMPLAINING ABOUT, COUSIN? LOOK, THE FRIDGE IS SAFE AND SOUND!



ROLICKING RATS! WHY DID YOU BRING IT? THERE AREN'T ANY ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES IN THIS PERIOD!



I KNOW, BUT WHO KNOWS? MAYBE IT'LL TURN OUT TO BE USEFUL TO US, AND NO ONE WILL NOTICE IT INSIDE THIS BAG!



IT WOULD BE GOOD TO **GET GOING** NOW! THE PIRATE CATS ALREADY HAVE ENOUGH OF AN ADVANTAGE!

YOU'RE RIGHT, PATTY, WE'D BETTER NOT LOSE ANY MORE TIME! **LET'S GO!**



AFTER A QUICK CHANGE OF CLOTHES...

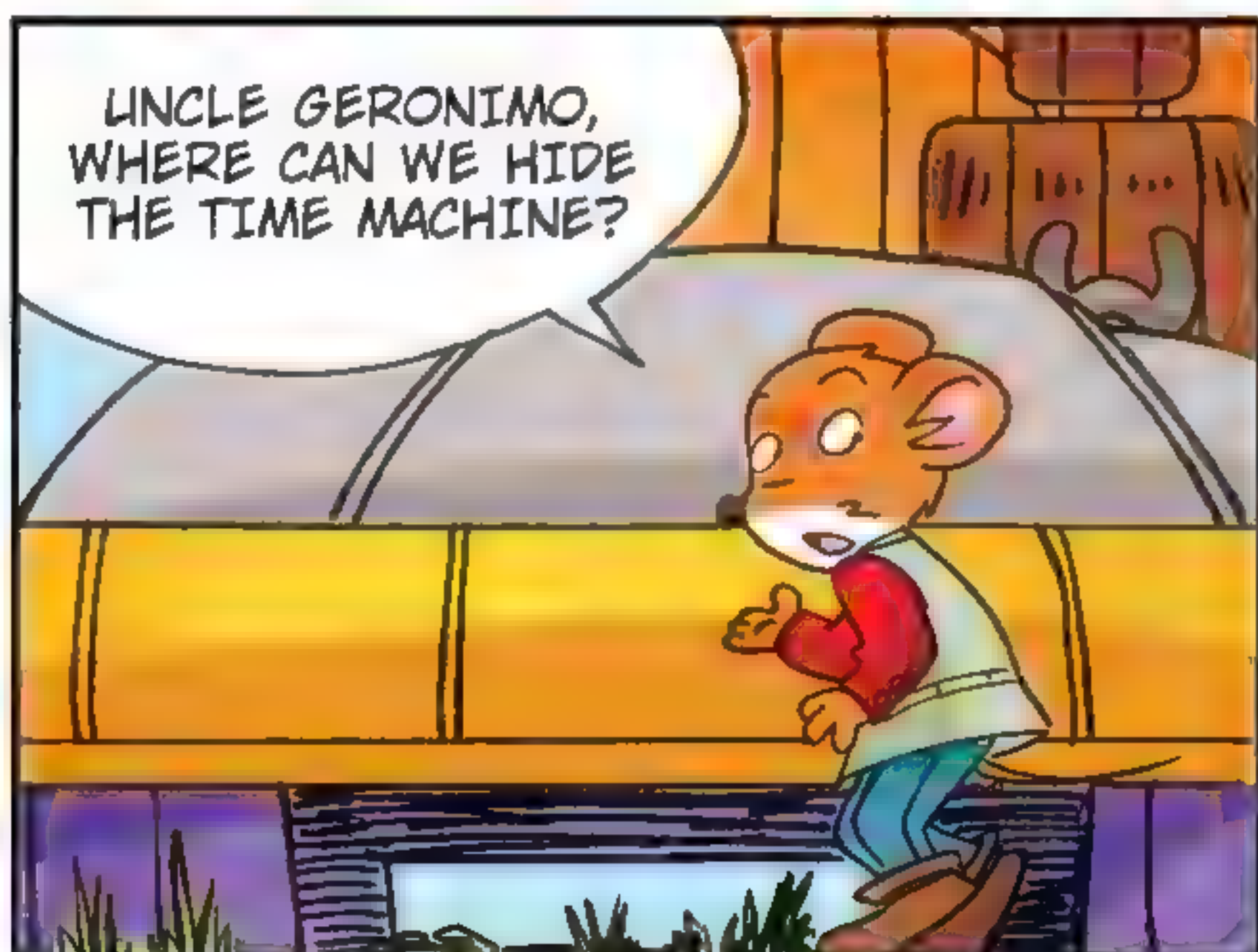
>SIGH...THIS TIME PROFESSOR VON VOLT DIDN'T GUESS THE RIGHT SIZE!

TEE, HEE, HEE!

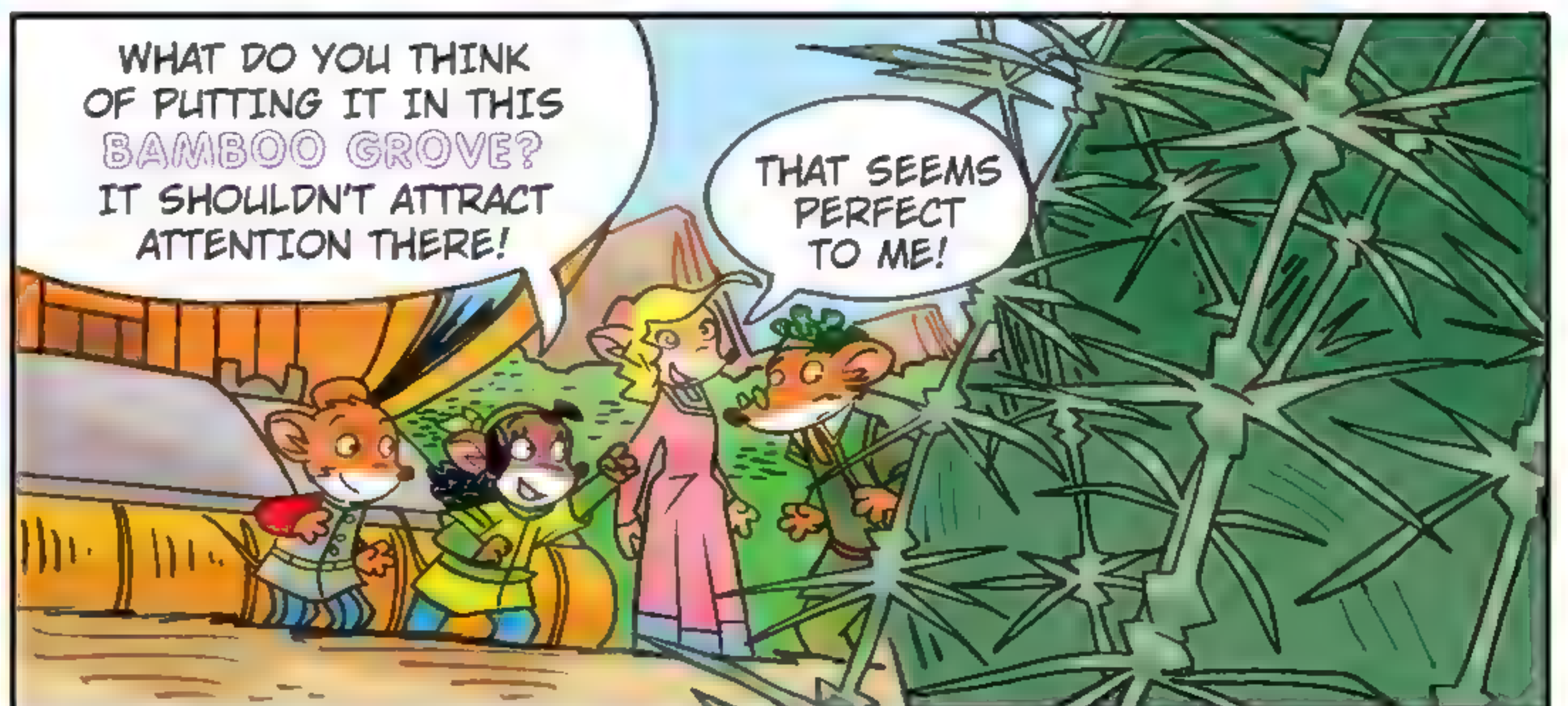


I'LL **ROLL UP** YOUR SLEEVES LIKE THIS SO YOU'LL BE MORE COMFORTABLE!

UM...THANKS, PETUNIA!



UNCLE GERONIMO, WHERE CAN WE HIDE THE TIME MACHINE?



WHAT DO YOU THINK OF PUTTING IT IN THIS **BAMBOO GROVE**? IT SHOULDN'T ATTRACT ATTENTION THERE!

THAT SEEMS PERFECT TO ME!

AFTER HIDING
THE SPEEDRAT, WE
FINALLY SET OUT...



THESE RICE
PADDIES ARE
SO PEACEFUL...

RICE PADDIES

ARE AREAS OF LAND DEVOTED TO GROWING RICE. SINCE RICE NEEDS A LOT OF WATER TO GROW, RICE PADDIES ARE SUBMERGED IN WATER DURING THE WHOLE TIME THE PLANT IS GROWING. RICE FIELDS ARE WIDESPREAD IN CHINA AND RICE IS THE PRINCIPAL FOOD OF THE COUNTRY. DURING THE TIME OF MARCO POLO, THE CHINESE HAD BUILT A VERY ADVANCED SYSTEM OF CANALS THAT ALLOWED THE FARMERS TO FLOOD THE RICE FIELDS WITH WATER WITHOUT HAVING TO WAIT FOR RAIN.

HELPPPPP!
WHO CAN HELP
ME???

???

MAYBE
YOU SPOKE
TOO SOON!

GET OFF
YOUR HORSE,
RIGHT NOW!

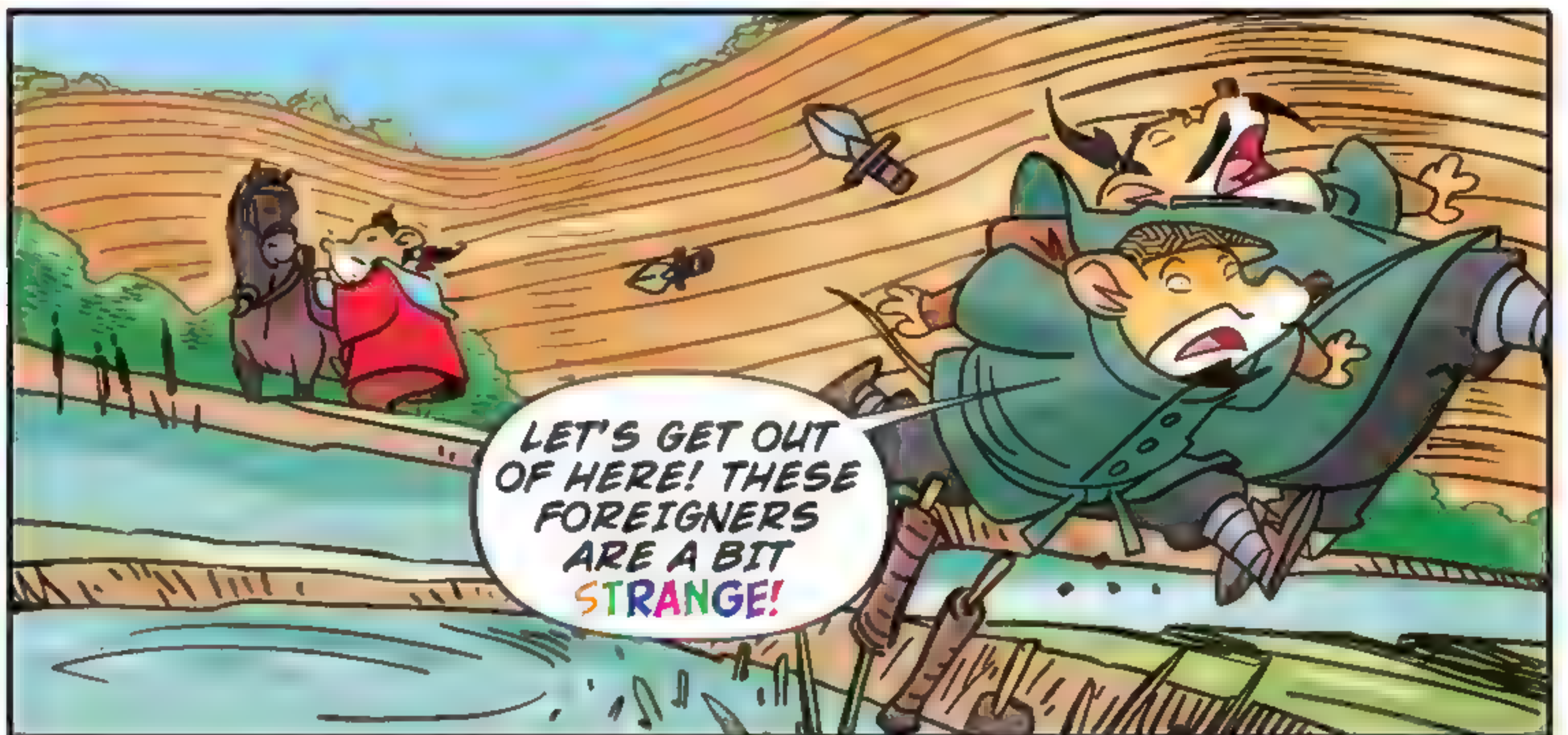
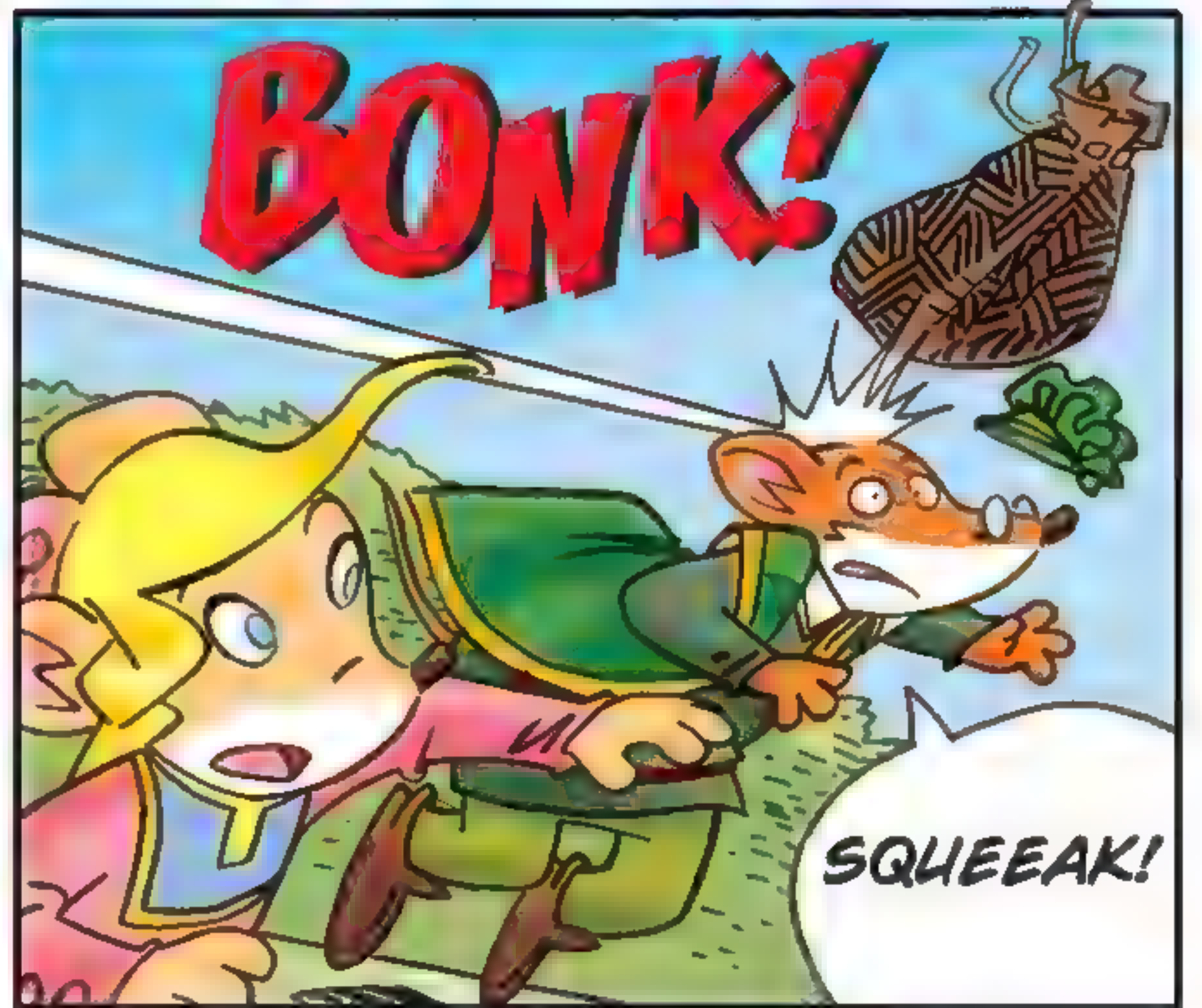
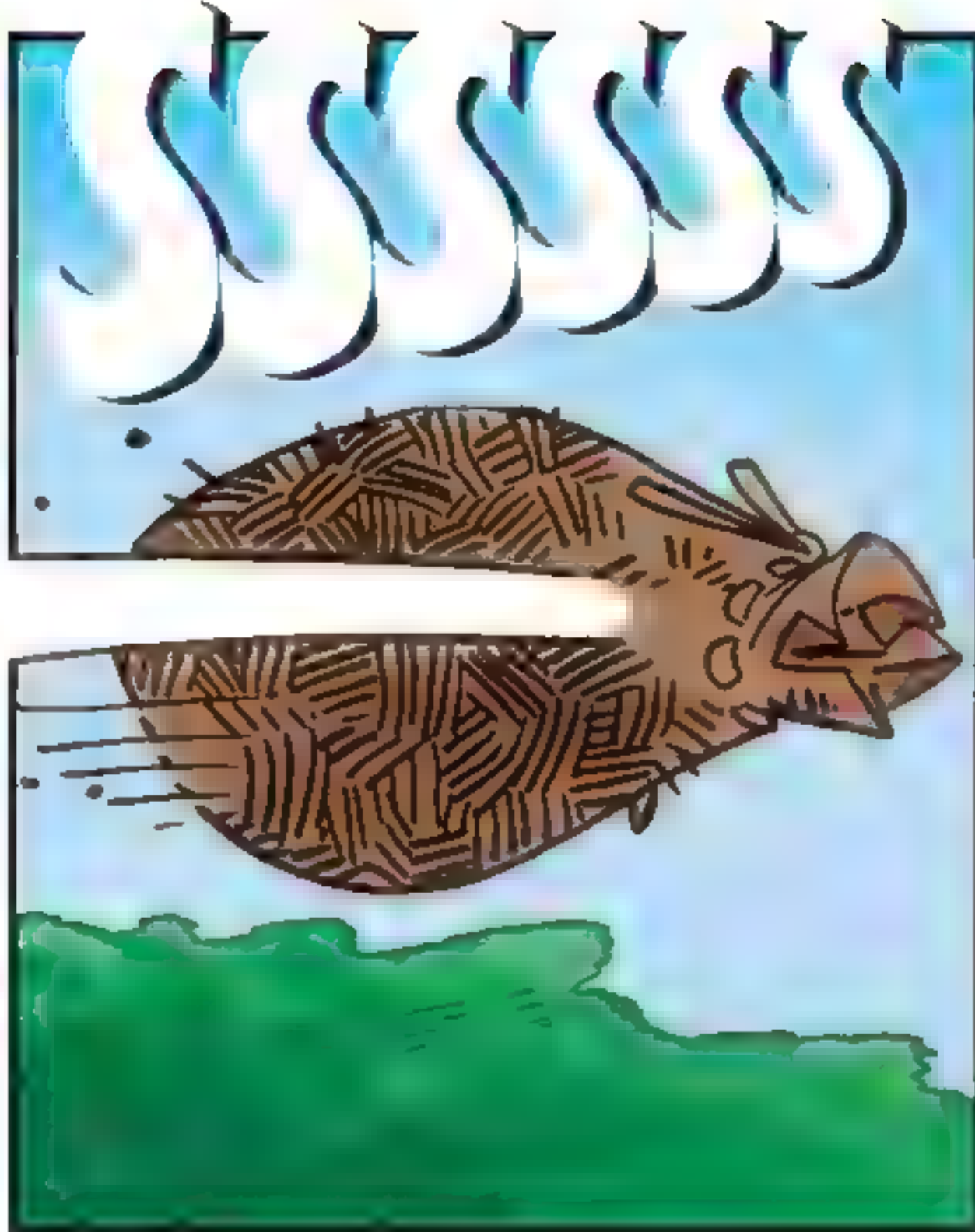
HEY LOOK!
THAT RODENT
IS IN
DANGER!

GIVE US
ALL YOUR
MONEY,
RODENT!

HOW DARE YOU,
SCOUNDRELS?
I'M AN IMPERIAL
OFFICIAL: THE
GREAT KHAN WILL
PUNISH YOU
FOR THIS!

GET YOUR
PAWS OFF
HIM!

FOR ALL
THE EMPEROR'S
RICE!
FOREIGNERS!

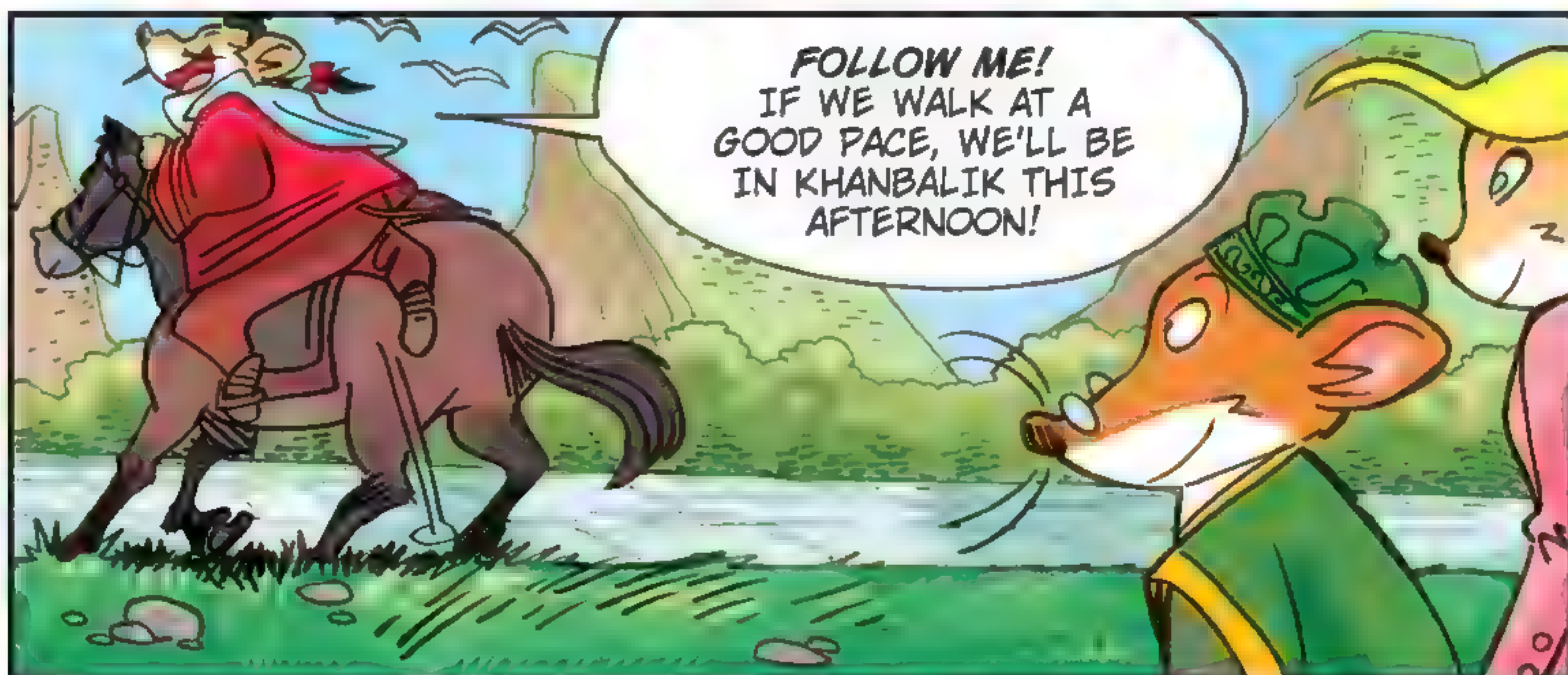
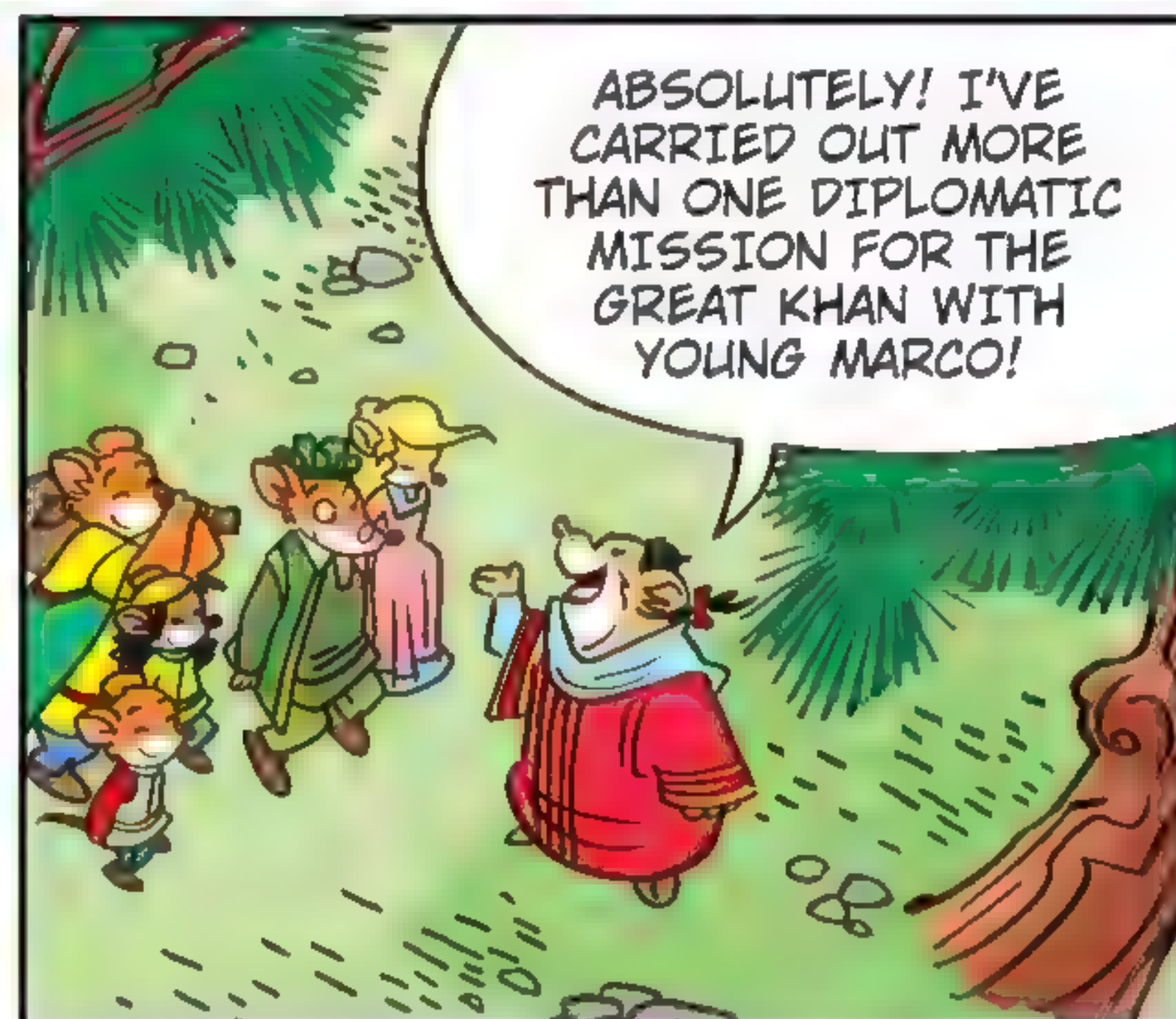
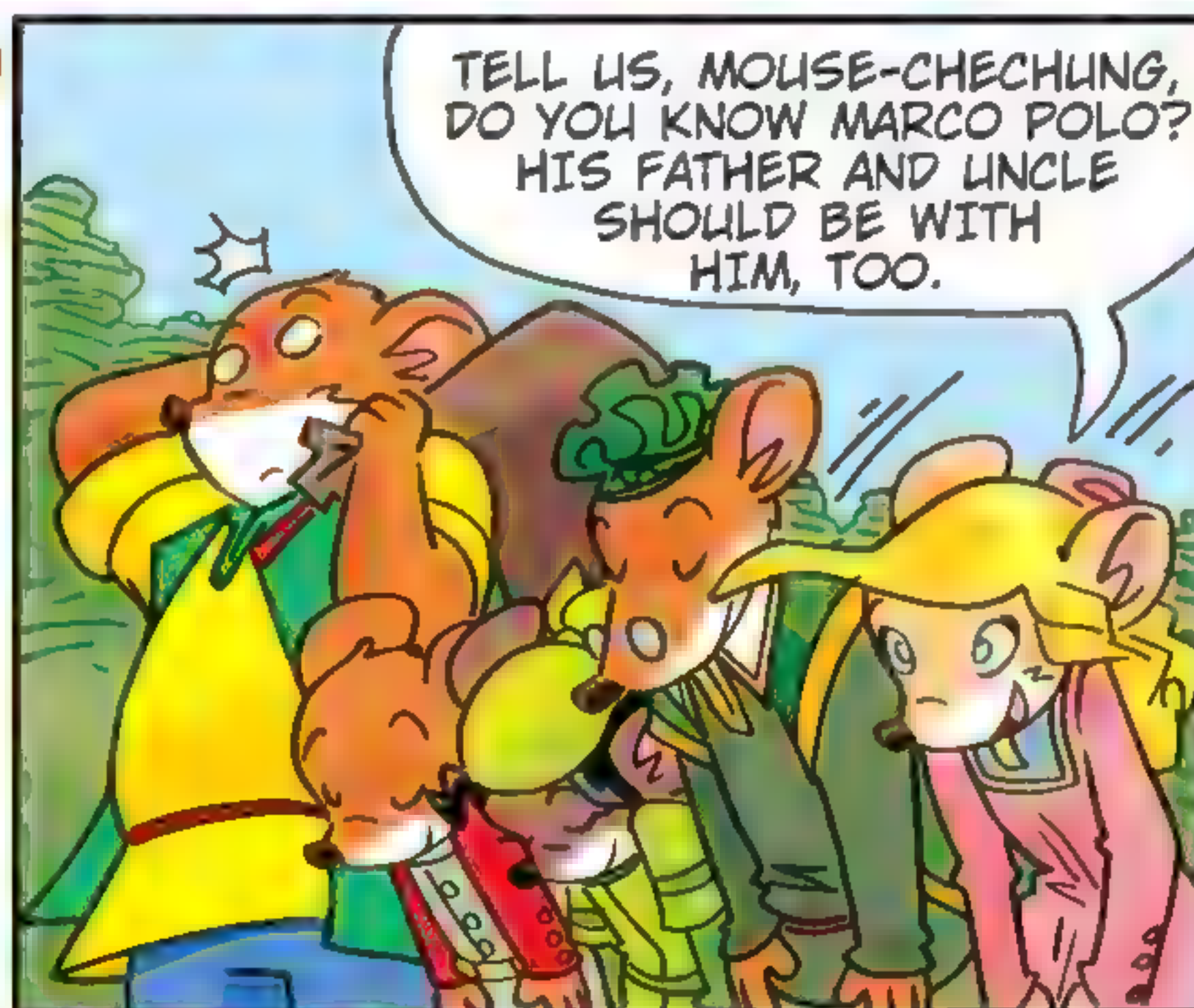


*MISTRESS/ MISS, IN OLD ITALIAN.



OFFICIALS

IN ORDER TO
ADMINISTER HIS VERY
VAST KINGDOM, THE
GREAT KHAN USED
MANY OFFICIALS. THEY
TRAVELED CONSTANTLY
THROUGHOUT THE
ENTIRE EMPIRE,
WORKING TO CONVEY
HIS COMMANDS TO
THE GOVERNORS OF
THE DIFFERENT
PROVINCES.

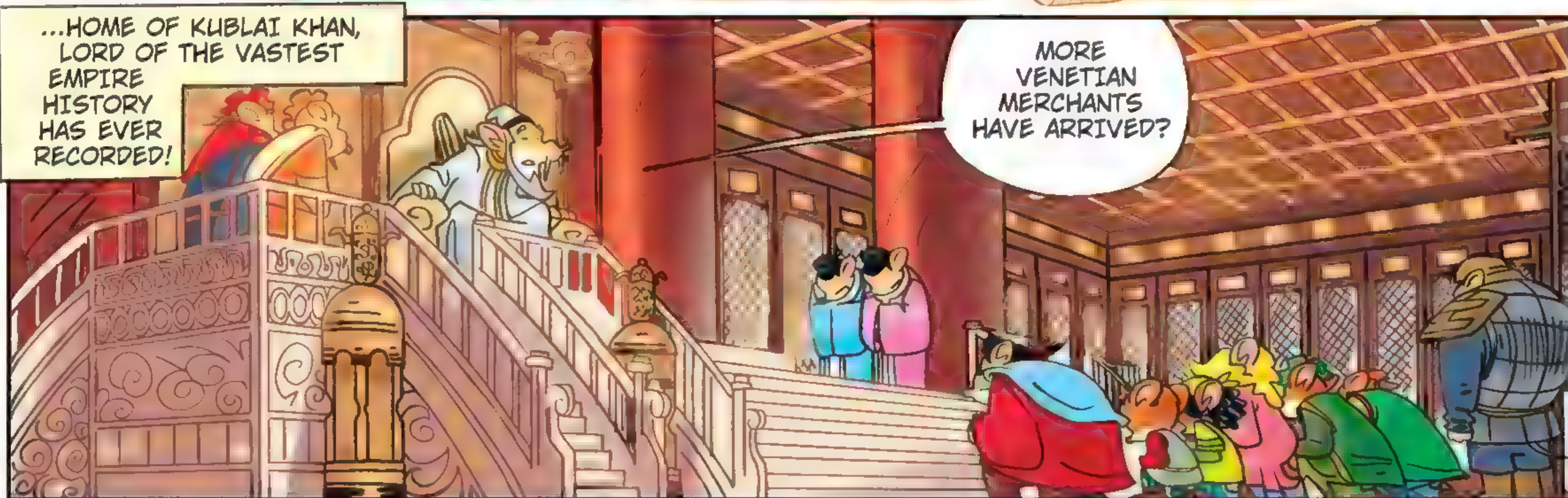




SO WE ARRIVED AT THE IMPERIAL PALACE IN THE MAGNIFICENT ROYAL CITY OF KHANBALIK...

THE IMPERIAL PALACE

ROSE FROM INSIDE A DOUBLY WALLED-IN AREA. BASED ON MARCO POLO'S DESCRIPTION, IT WAS IMMENSE, AND THE WALLS OF ITS ROOMS WERE COVERED WITH SILVER AND GOLD. THERE WERE GARDENS AND A LAKE, FED BY A RIVER. IN ADDITION, JUST BEHIND THE PALACE, THE KHAN HAD BUILT AN ARTIFICIAL HILL, ON WHICH TREES FROM EVERY REGION IN THE EMPIRE WERE PLANTED.



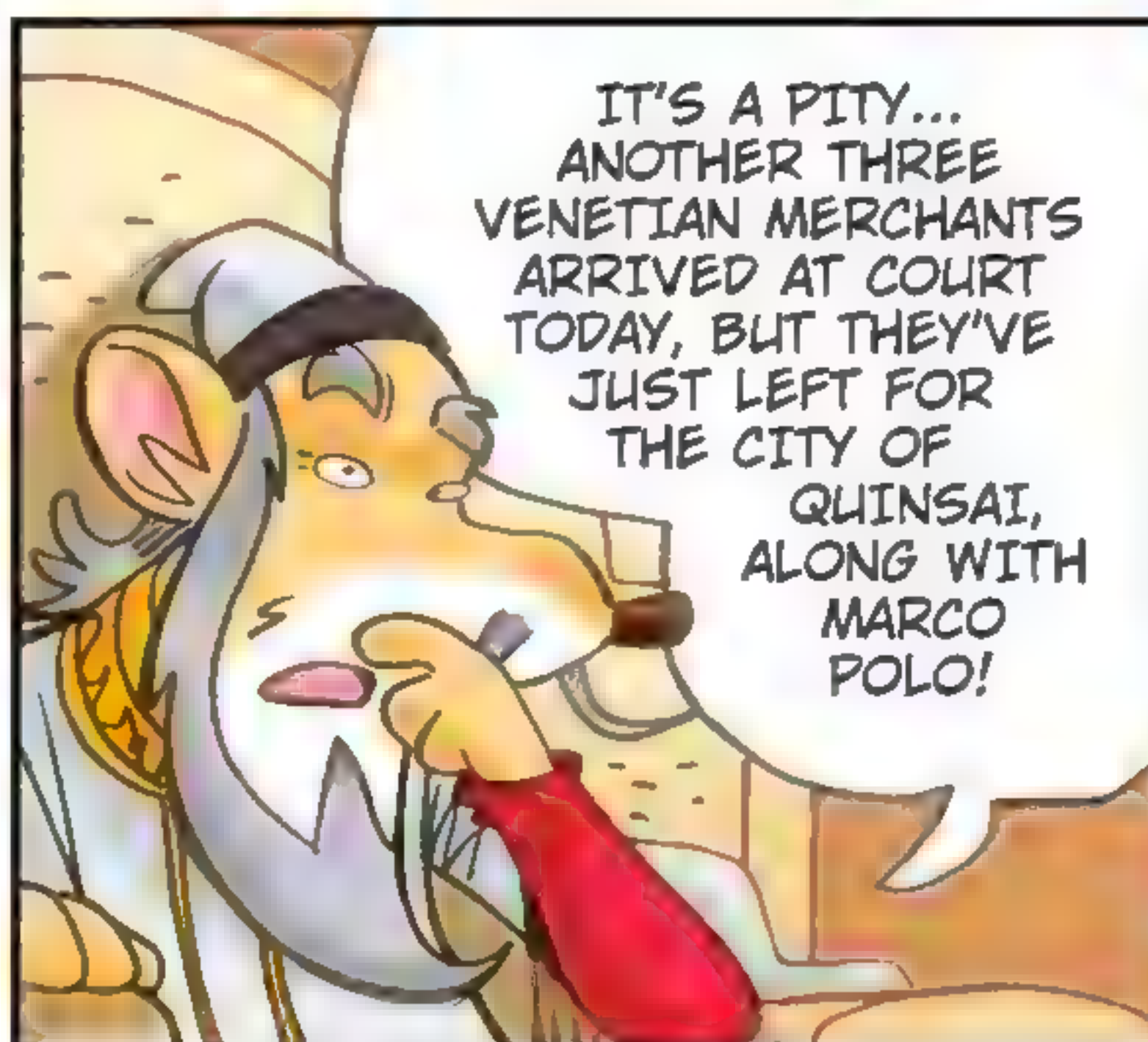
...HOME OF KUBLAI KHAN, LORD OF THE VASTEST EMPIRE HISTORY HAS EVER RECORDED!

MORE VENETIAN MERCHANTS HAVE ARRIVED?



THIS IS REALLY A DAY OF SURPRISES!

?!?

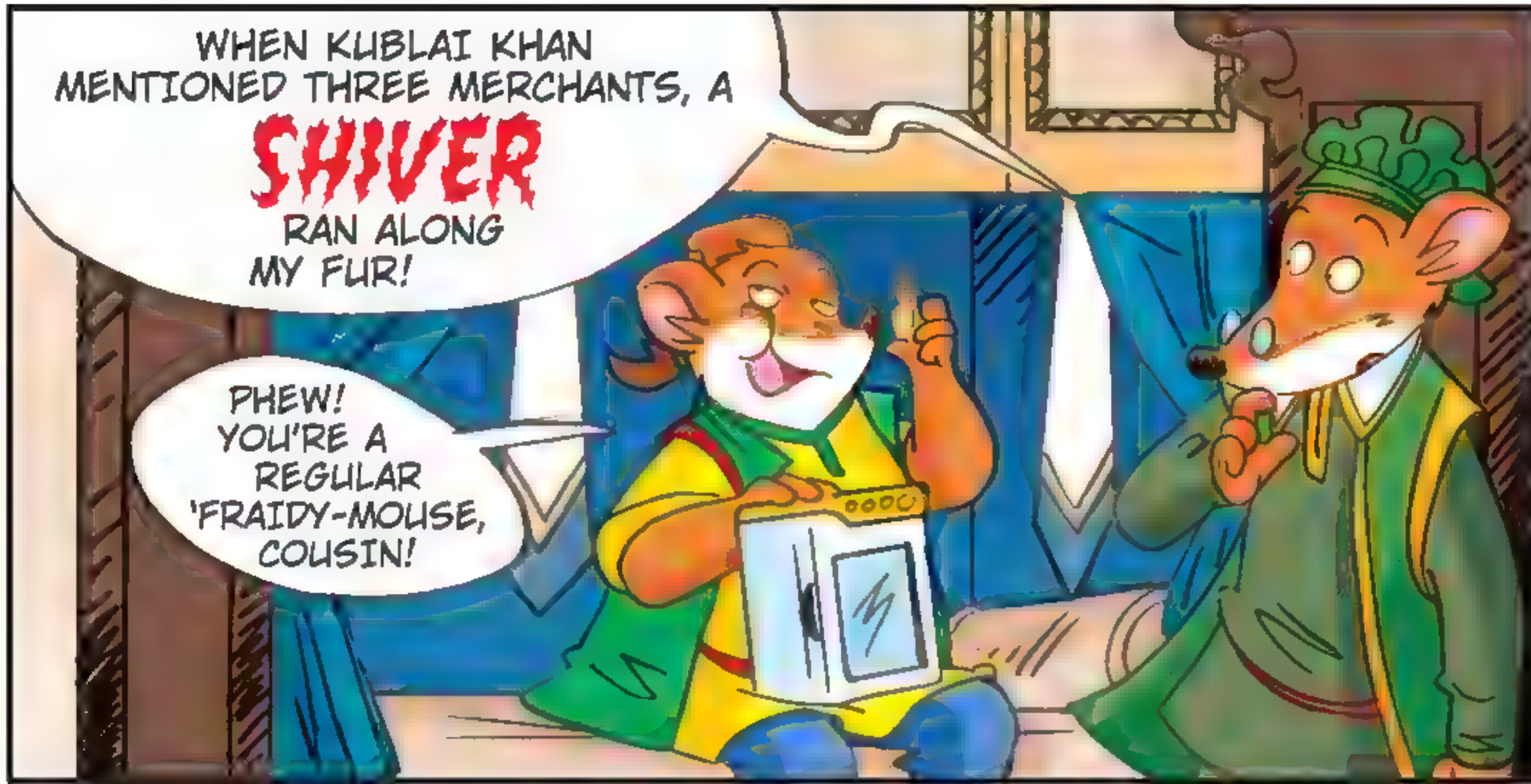


IT'S A PITY... ANOTHER THREE VENETIAN MERCHANTS ARRIVED AT COURT TODAY, BUT THEY'VE JUST LEFT FOR THE CITY OF QUINSAI, ALONG WITH MARCO POLO!

QUINSAI

WAS THE ANCIENT NAME OF THE MODERN-DAY CITY OF HANGZHOU. BUILT ON THE YANGTZE RIVER DELTA (THE BLUE RIVER), ITS LANDSCAPE LOOKS A LOT LIKE VENICE, WITH MANY BRIDGES AND CANALS. MARCO POLO WAS VERY FOND OF THE SPOT AND SPOKE OF IT AS ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AND NOBLE CITIES IN THE WORLD.





WHEN KUBLAI KHAN
MENTIONED THREE MERCHANTS, A
SHIVER
RAN ALONG
MY FUR!

PHEW!
YOU'RE A
REGULAR
'FRAIDY-MOUSE,
COUSIN!



BUT THEIR
ARRIVAL IS A
REALLY STRANGE
COINCIDENCE!
WE SHOULD
INVESTIGATE!



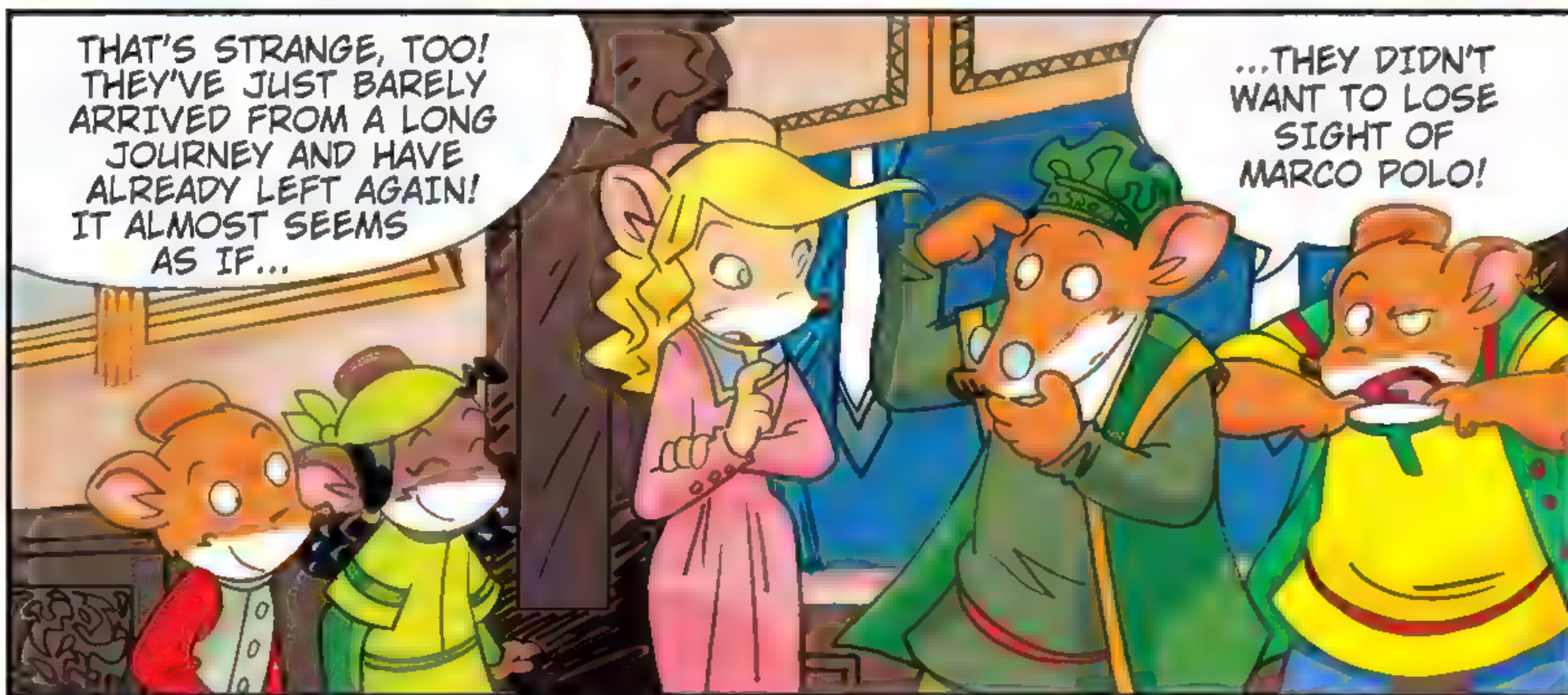
I AGREE WITH YOU,
PETUNIA!
IMAGINE IF
YOU DIDN'T!



>PHEW...< WHERE
WERE THE THREE MER-
CHANTS HEADED?
TO
CHUNCHAI,
I THINK...



**NO, IT WAS
QUINSAI!** AND MARCO
POLO WAS
WITH THEM!



THAT'S STRANGE, TOO!
THEY'VE JUST BARELY
ARRIVED FROM A LONG
JOURNEY AND HAVE
ALREADY LEFT AGAIN!
IT ALMOST SEEMS
AS IF...

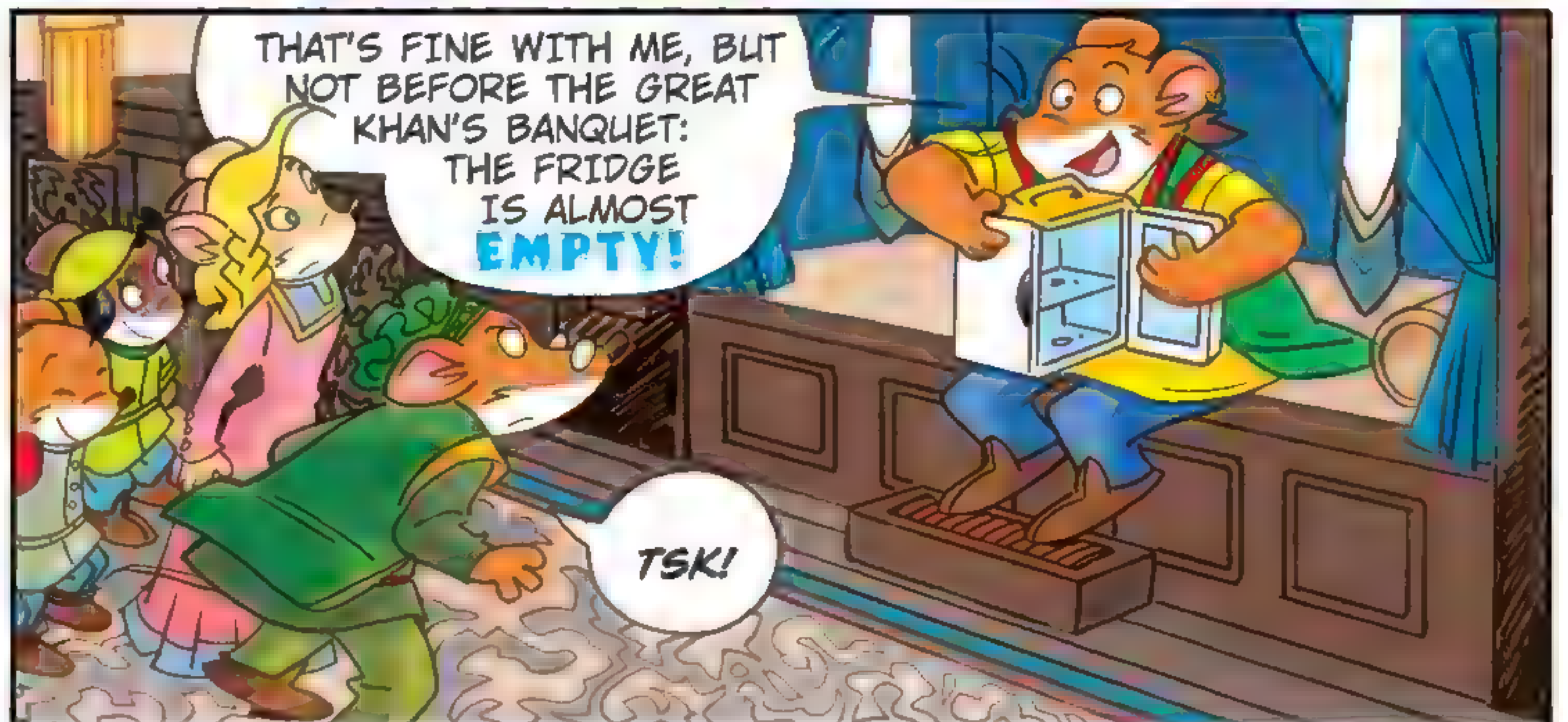
...THEY DIDN'T
WANT TO LOSE
SIGHT OF
MARCO POLO!



IT REALLY
SEEMS
LIKE...BUT
IF THIS IS
REALLY
ABOUT
THE PIRATE
CATS, WHAT
CAN THEY
WANT WITH
HIM?



THE ONLY WAY
TO KNOW IS FOR
US TO GO TO
QUINSAI TOO, AND
KEEP OUR EYES
WIDE OPEN! THEY
COULD BE
ANYWHERE!



THAT'S FINE WITH ME, BUT
NOT BEFORE THE GREAT
KHAN'S BANQUET:
THE FRIDGE
IS ALMOST
EMPTY!

TSK!

THAT EVENING,
DURING THE
MAGNIFICENT
BANQUET GIVEN BY
THE EMPEROR...



...I TOOK ADVANTAGE
OF THE OPPORTUNITY
TO CONSULT WITH
MOUSE-CHECHUNG
AND THE POLO
BROTHERS.



SO YOU WANT
TO GO TO THE CITY
OF QUINSAL, TOO?

WE'D LIKE TO VISIT IT AND
MEET YOUR **SON!**

WOW!
YOU'RE
REALLY
TIRELESS
TRAVELERS!



THE ROUTE IS RATHER LONG: IT
WILL TAKE AROUND A MONTH ON
HORSEBACK! WHEN DO YOU
WANT TO
LEAVE?

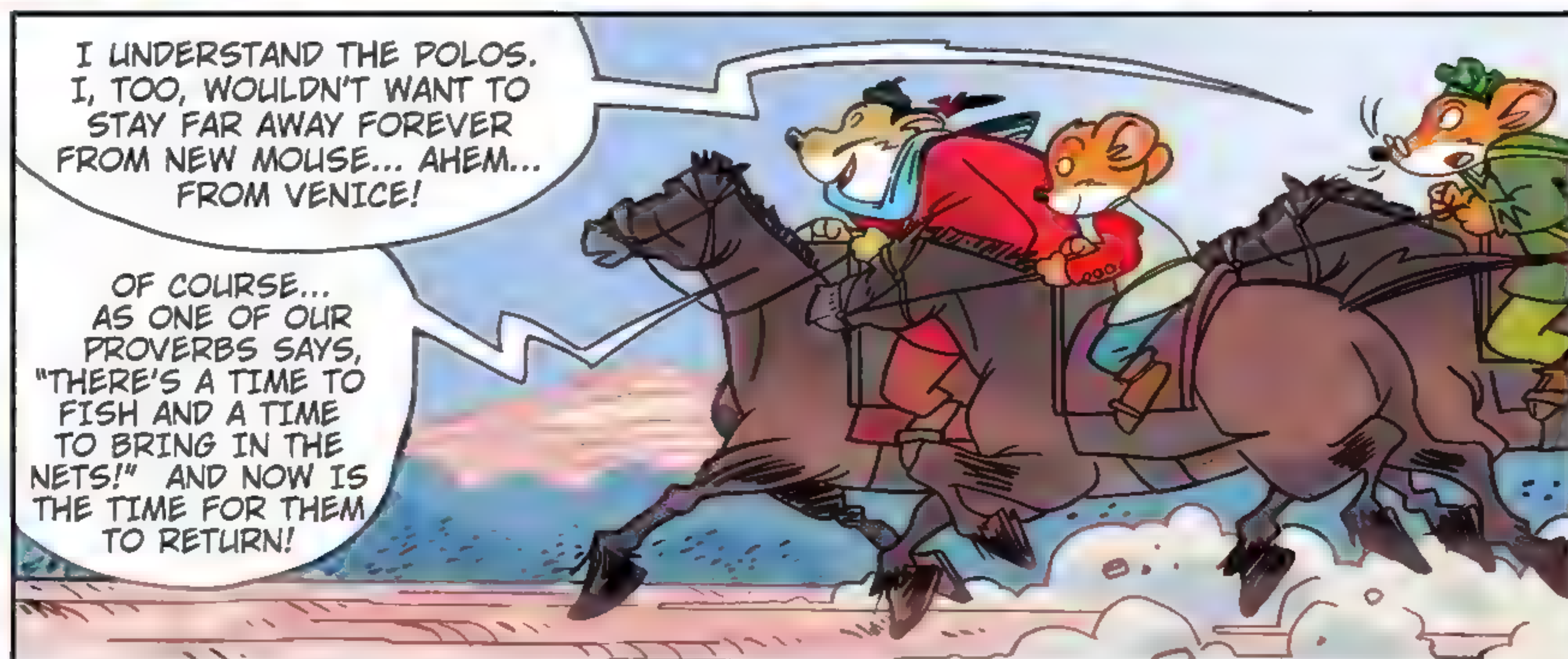
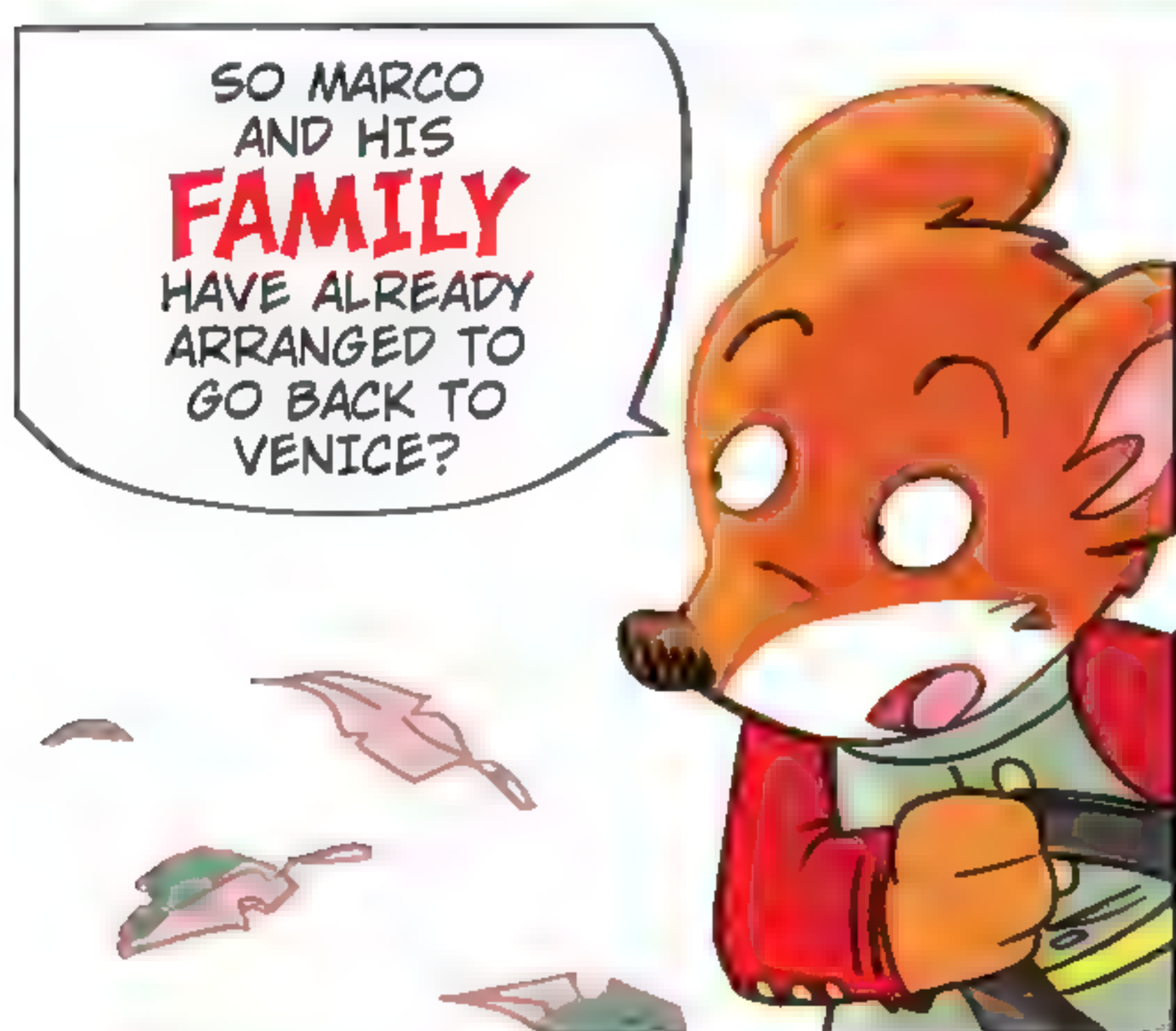
TOMORROW
MORNING
IF POSSIBLE!



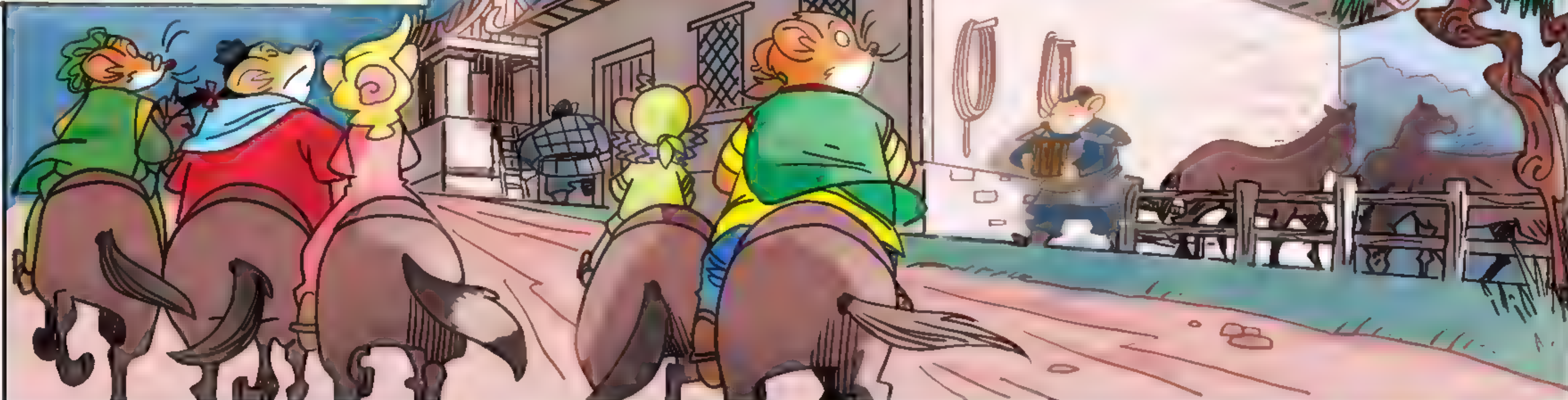
IT SHOULD BE. I'LL TALK
TO THE KHAN ABOUT IT.
I THINK HE'LL AGREE
I SHOULD GO WITH
YOU MYSELF!

THANKS, MOUSE-
CHECHUNG, YOU'RE
A REAL GENTLE-
MOUSE!





THE FOLLOWING DAY, WE
RODE FROM DAWN TO DUSK,
STOPPING ONLY TO REST
AND CHANGE HORSES...



THE JOURNEY WAS
PEACEFUL, EXCEPT FOR A
FEW TINY INCIDENTS...

THE NETWORK OF ROADS

THE MONGOLIAN EMPIRE
HAD A SYSTEM OF ROADS
THAT WAS VERY ADVANCED
FOR THE TIME. STREETS
RAN FROM KHANBALIK TO
THE ENTIRE EMPIRE,
PASSABLE ON FOOT OR
HORSEBACK. ALONG THE
ROADS WERE STATIONS
WHERE THE KHAN'S MES-
SENGERS COULD REST AND
CHANGE HORSES BEFORE
CONTINUING ON TOWARDS
THEIR DESTINATIONS.

YIIIKES!

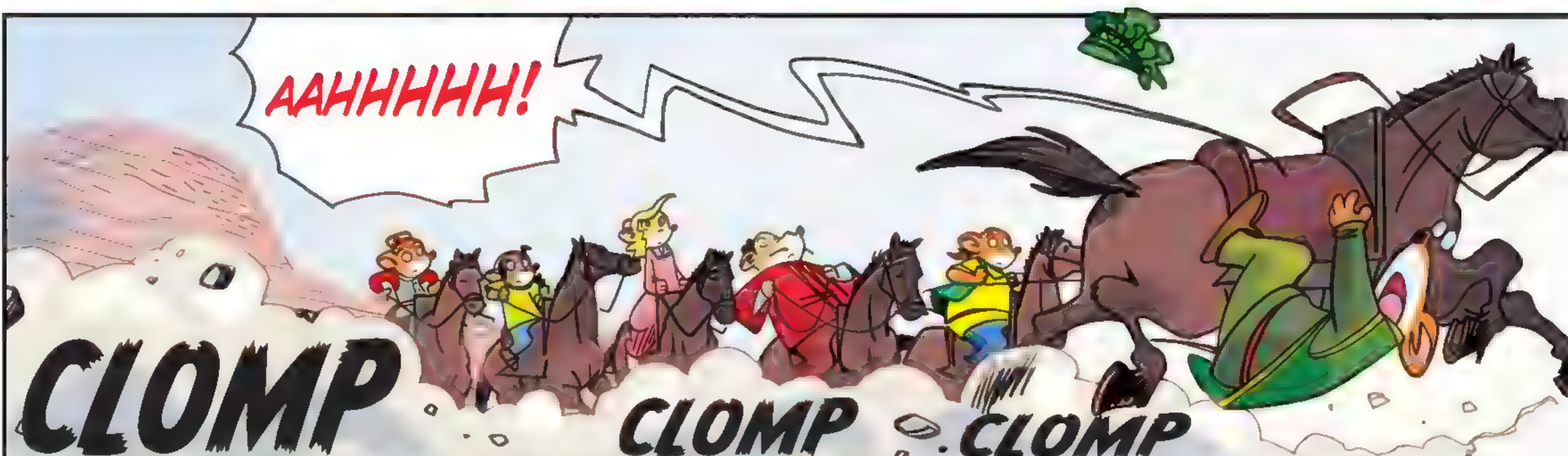


AAHHHHH!

CLOMP

CLOMP

CLOMP



AAHHH!
HELP!



MEANWHILE, WITH A DAY'S HEAD START BEFORE WE LEFT, THE PIRATE CATS HAD REACHED QUINSAI...

...AND HAD SETTLED IN WITH MARCO AT ONE OF THE KHAN'S PALACES.

WHAT SPLENDOR!
WHAT LUXURY!

INDEED! THE EMPEROR DOESN'T HOLD BACK FROM SPENDING FOR HIS RESIDENCE! AND YOU HAVEN'T SEEN THE GARDENS YET!

BUT YOU MUST'VE SEEN SO MANY INCREDIBLE THINGS DURING YOUR TRAVELS. RIGHT, MARCO?

YES, IT'S TRUE! I'VE TRAVELED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EMPIRE AND HAVE SEEN SOME WONDERFUL THINGS!

WE'RE REALLY **CURIOUS** TO HEAR YOUR TALES. RIGHT, RATONZO?

WELL... BY AND LARGE...

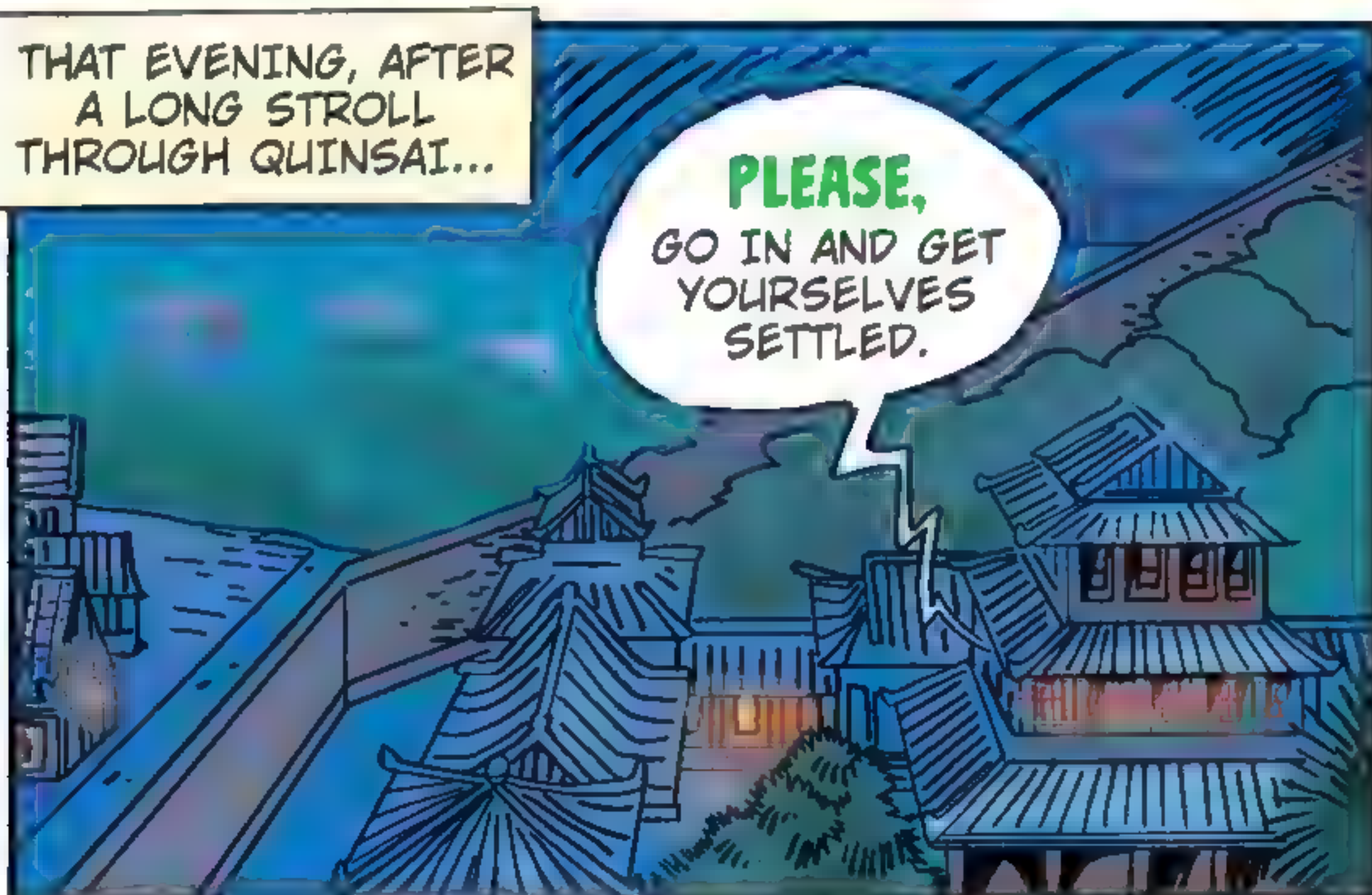
MY TALES? ACTUALLY, THEY MIGHT BE VERY INTERESTING FOR WESTERNERS!

OUCH!

BAM!

WHAT DID YOU DO TO REMEMBER EVERYTHING? DID YOU KEEP A DIARY PERHAPS?

OF COURSE! I WROTE DOWN EVERYTHING I SAW AND EVERY EXCITING THING I EXPERIENCED!





TIE HIM
UP AND
GAG HIM!

BONZO,
TIE HIM UP
AND GAG HIM!

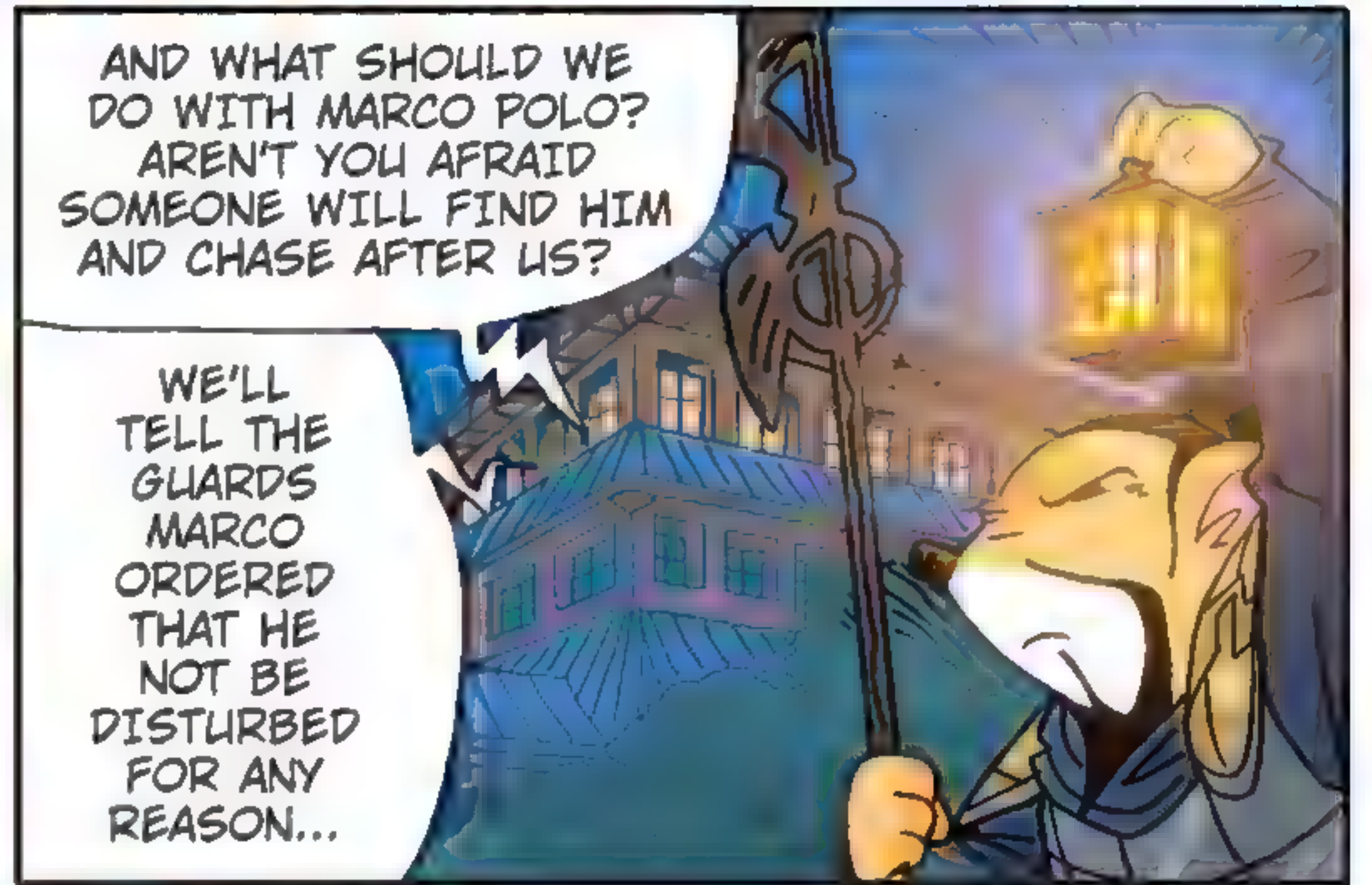


WE'VE
DONE IT!
MARCO
POLO'S
DIARY IS
OURS!



SEND BONZO TO SADDLE
THE HORSES SO WE CAN
RETURN TO KHANBALIK
AND GET BACK
TO THE **CATJET**!

WE'LL LEAVE
AT THE FIRST LIGHT
OF DAWN...THAT WAY
THE GUARDS WON'T
SUSPECT US!



AND WHAT SHOULD WE
DO WITH MARCO POLO?
AREN'T YOU AFRAID
SOMEONE WILL FIND HIM
AND CHASE AFTER US?

WE'LL
TELL THE
GUARDS
MARCO
ORDERED
THAT HE
NOT BE
DISTURBED
FOR ANY
REASON...



...AND TO BE SAFE, WE'LL
GO BACK TO KHANBALIK BY
SKIRTING THE IMPERIAL
CANAL: IT'S VERY CROWDED
THERE AND NO ONE
WILL **NOTICE US**!



MMMM!
HEL...!
MMMPH!



IT LOOKS LIKE
OUR FRIEND HAS
ALREADY REGAINED
CONSCIOUSNESS!

YOU SHOULD HAVE
A HARDER HEAD, LIKE
BONZO, HEE, HEE,
HEE!

HEY!

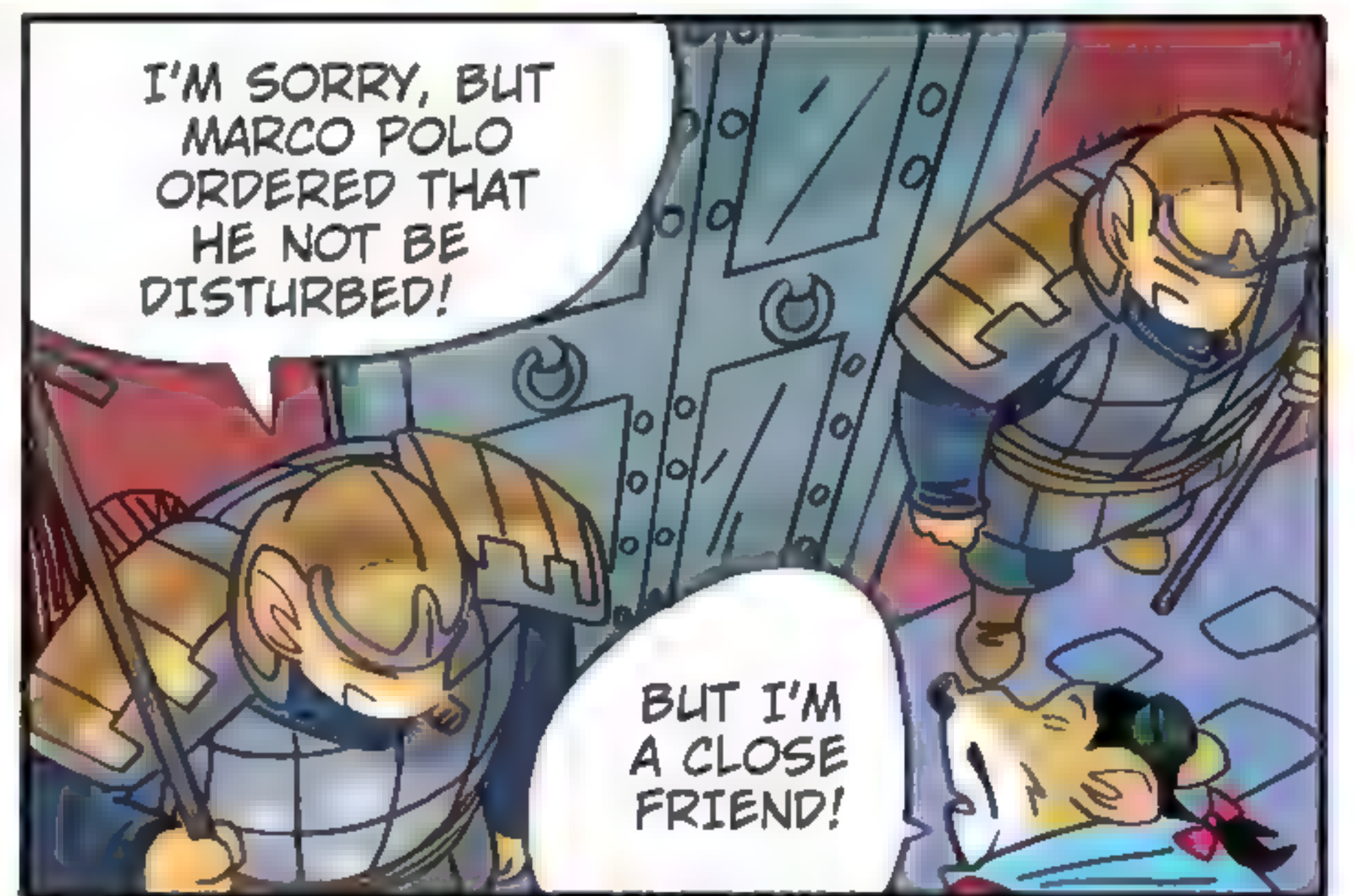


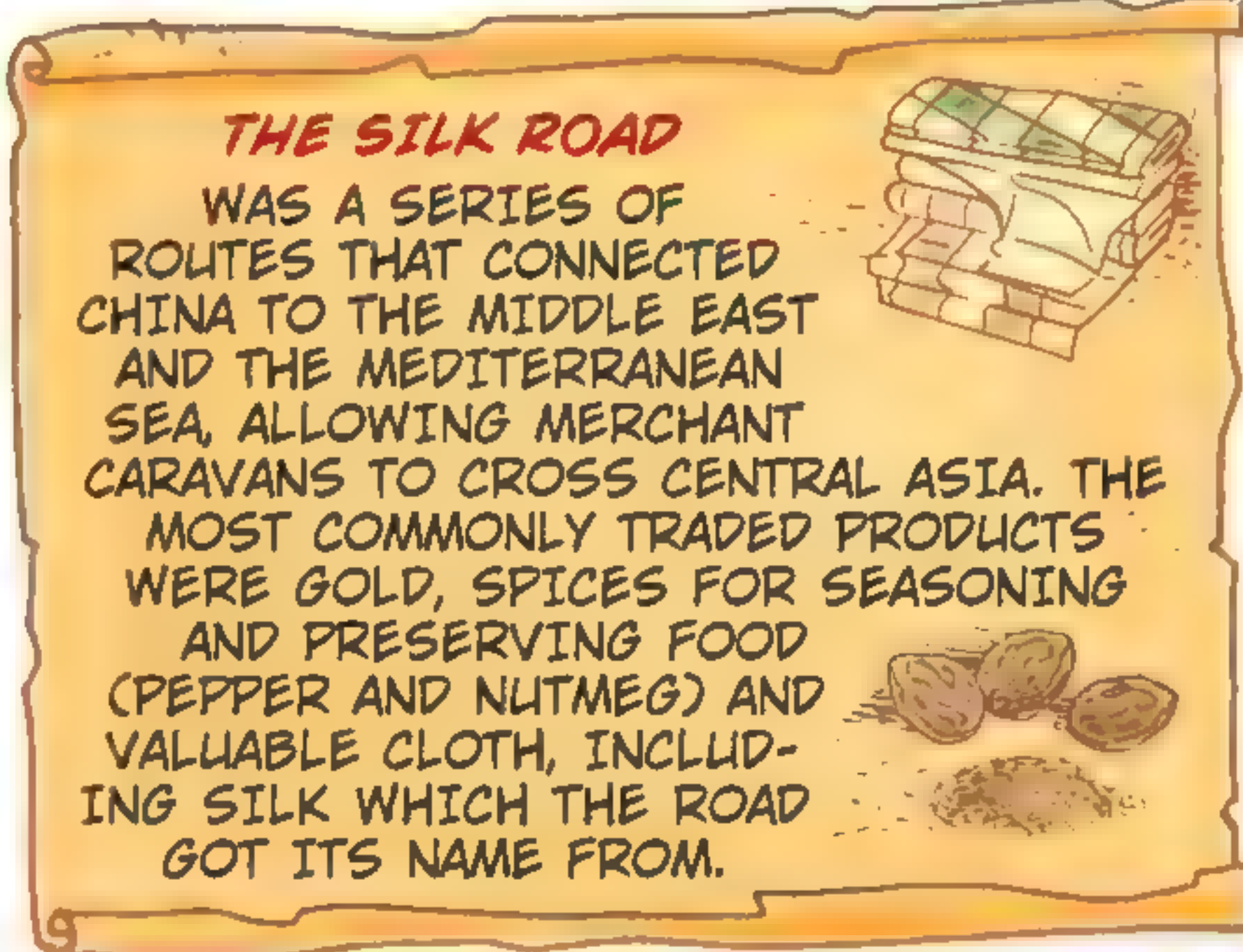
IT'S BEEN A REAL
PLEASURE GETTING
TO KNOW YOU,
MARCO POLO...
GOODBYE AND
THANKS!

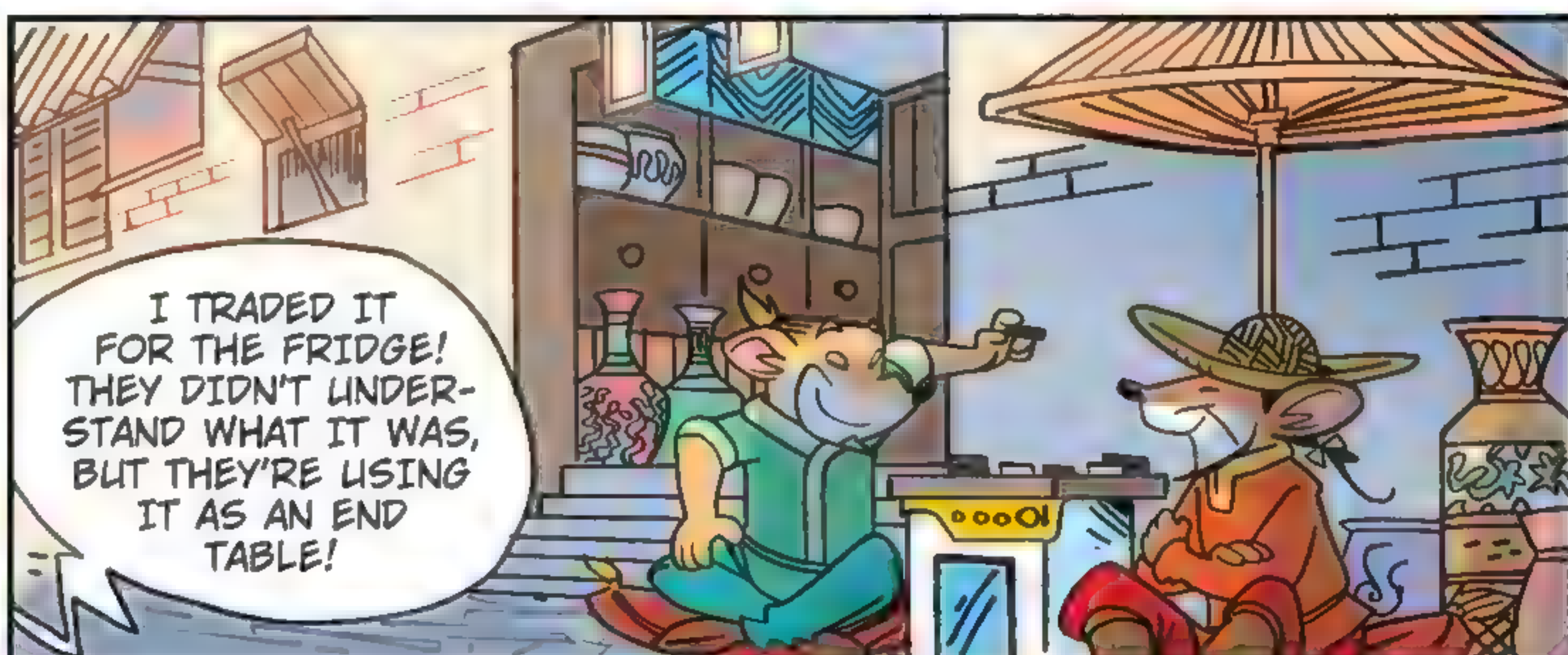
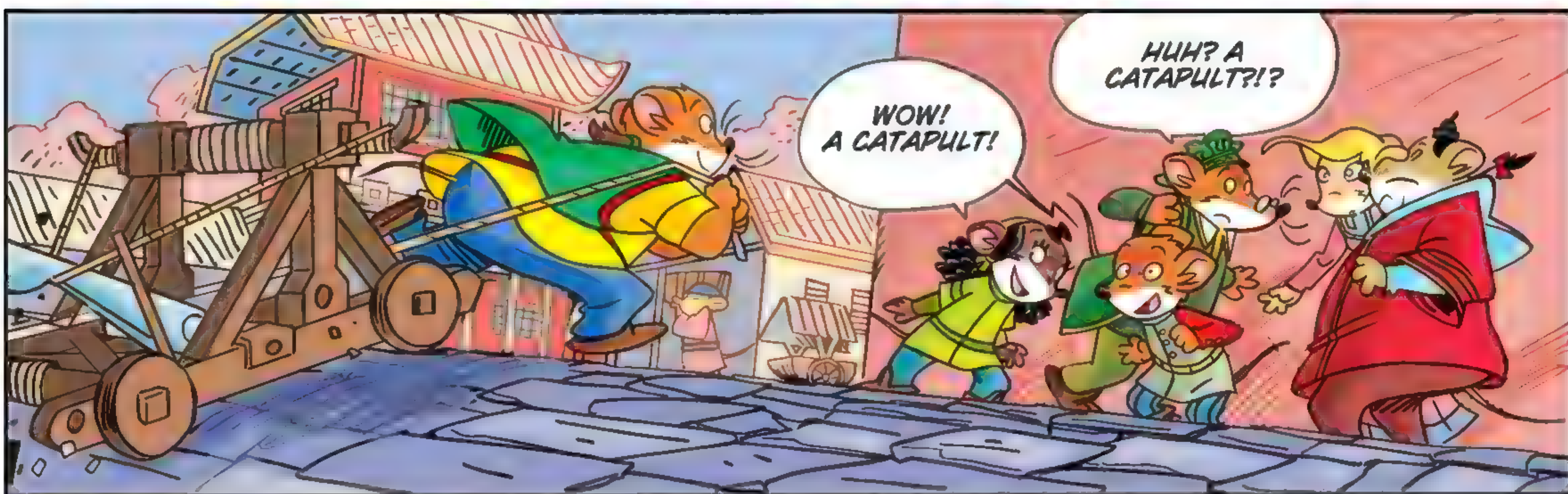
SMACK

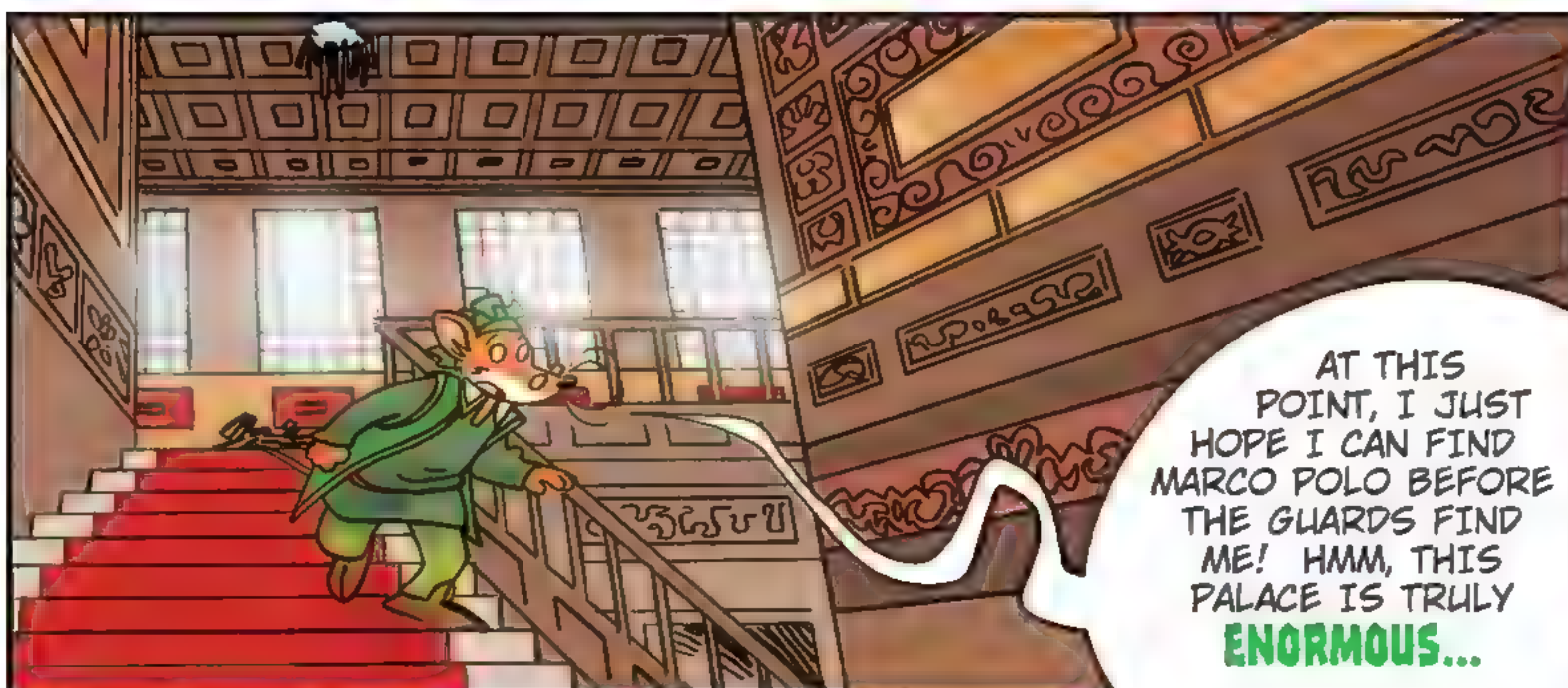
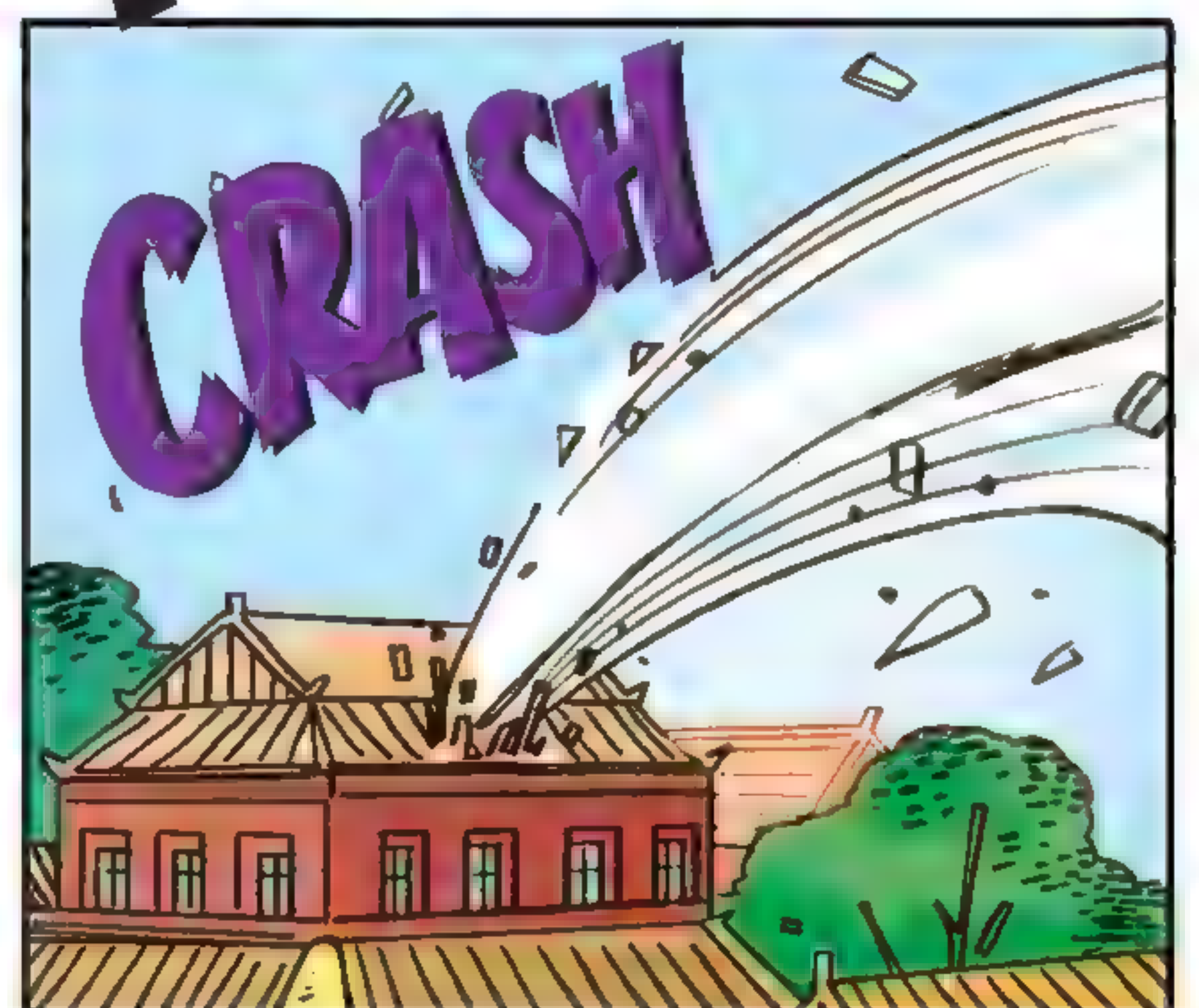
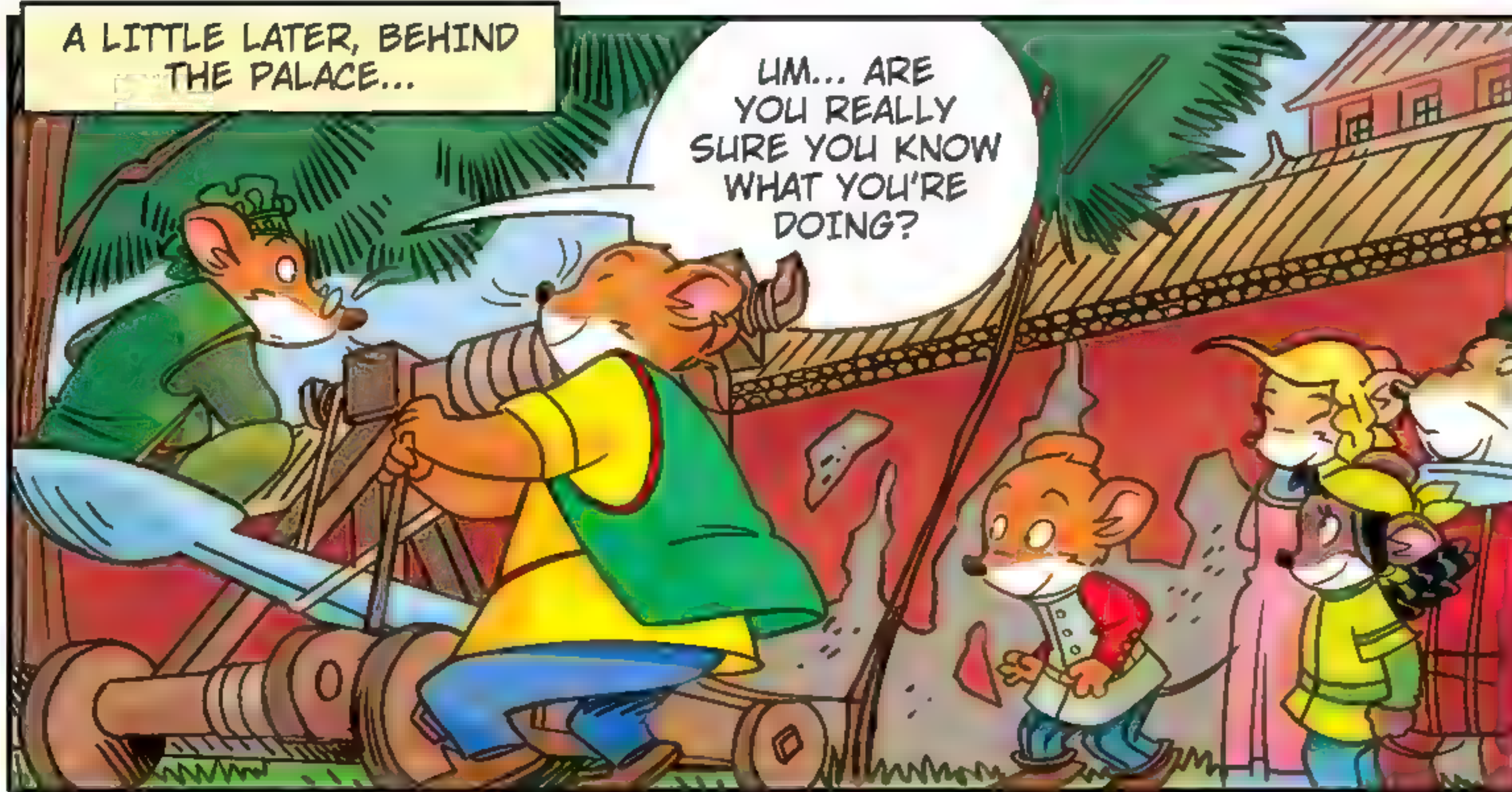


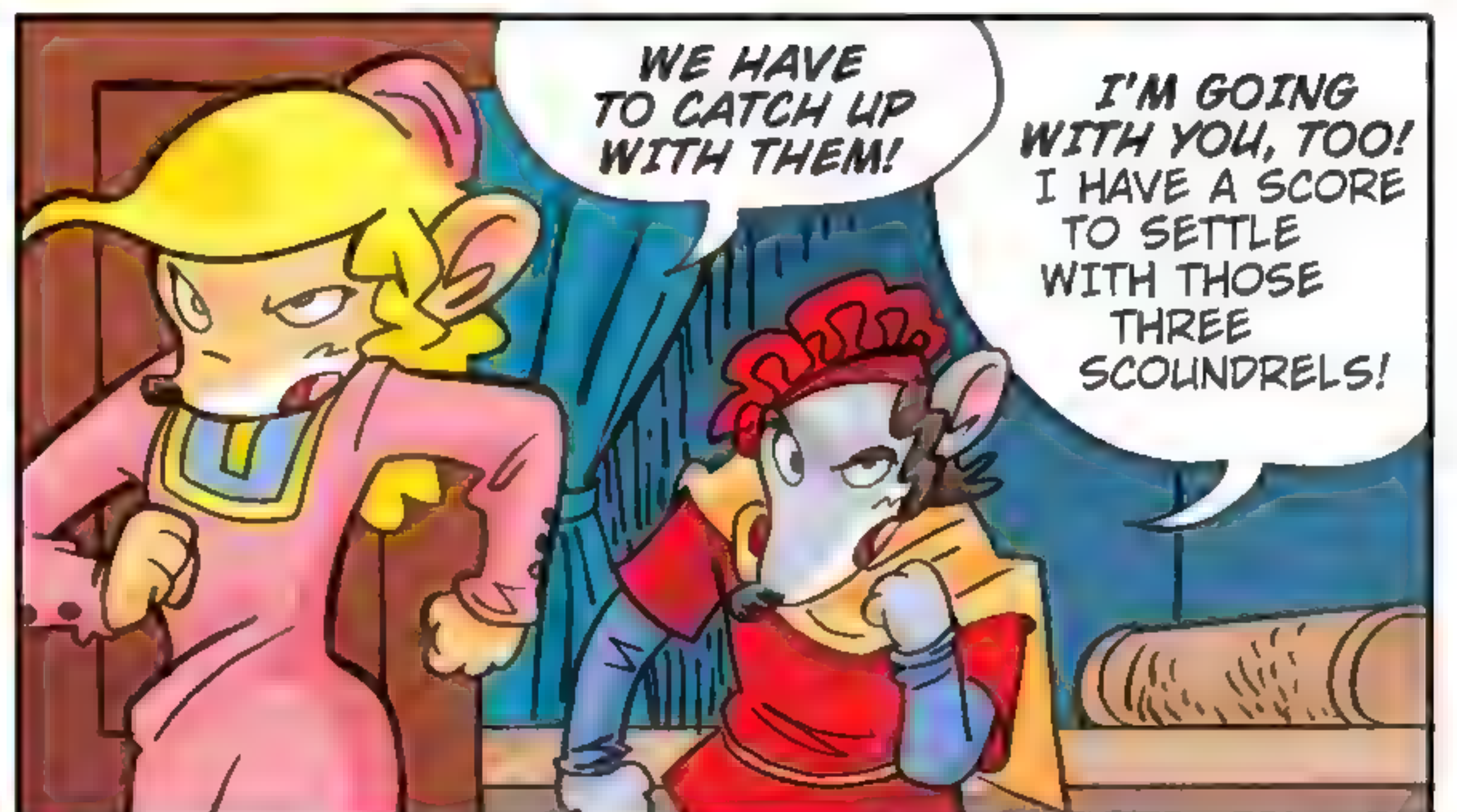
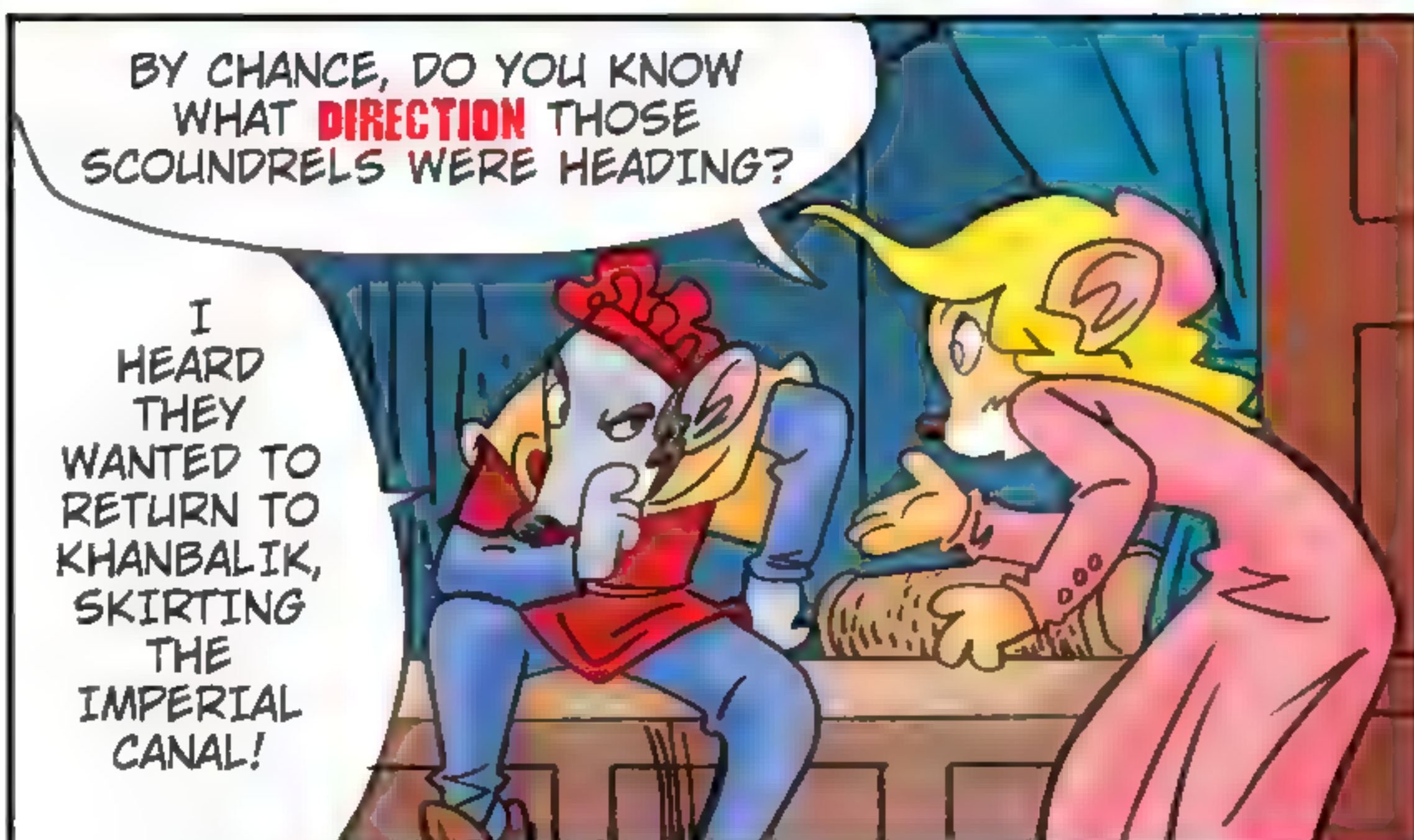
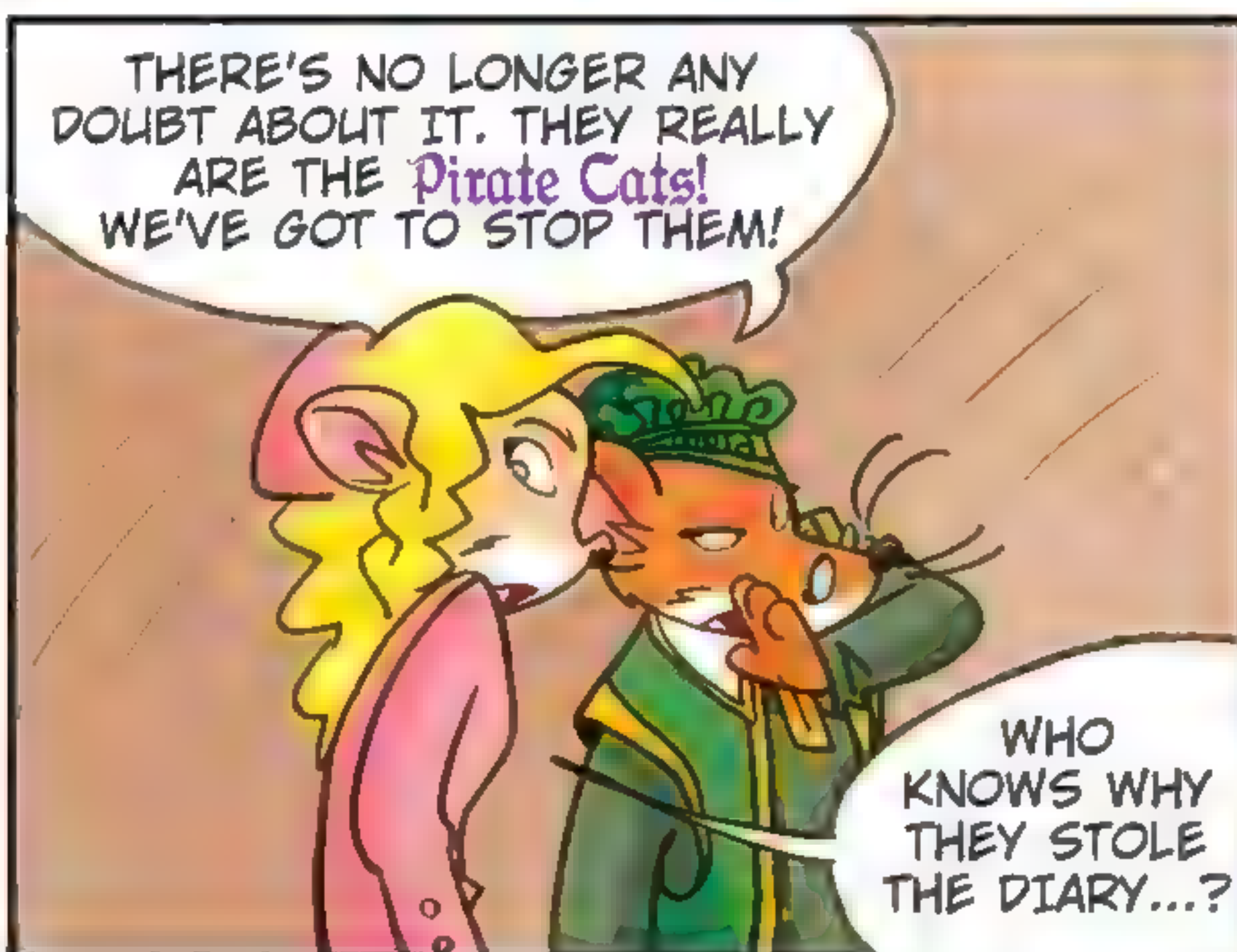
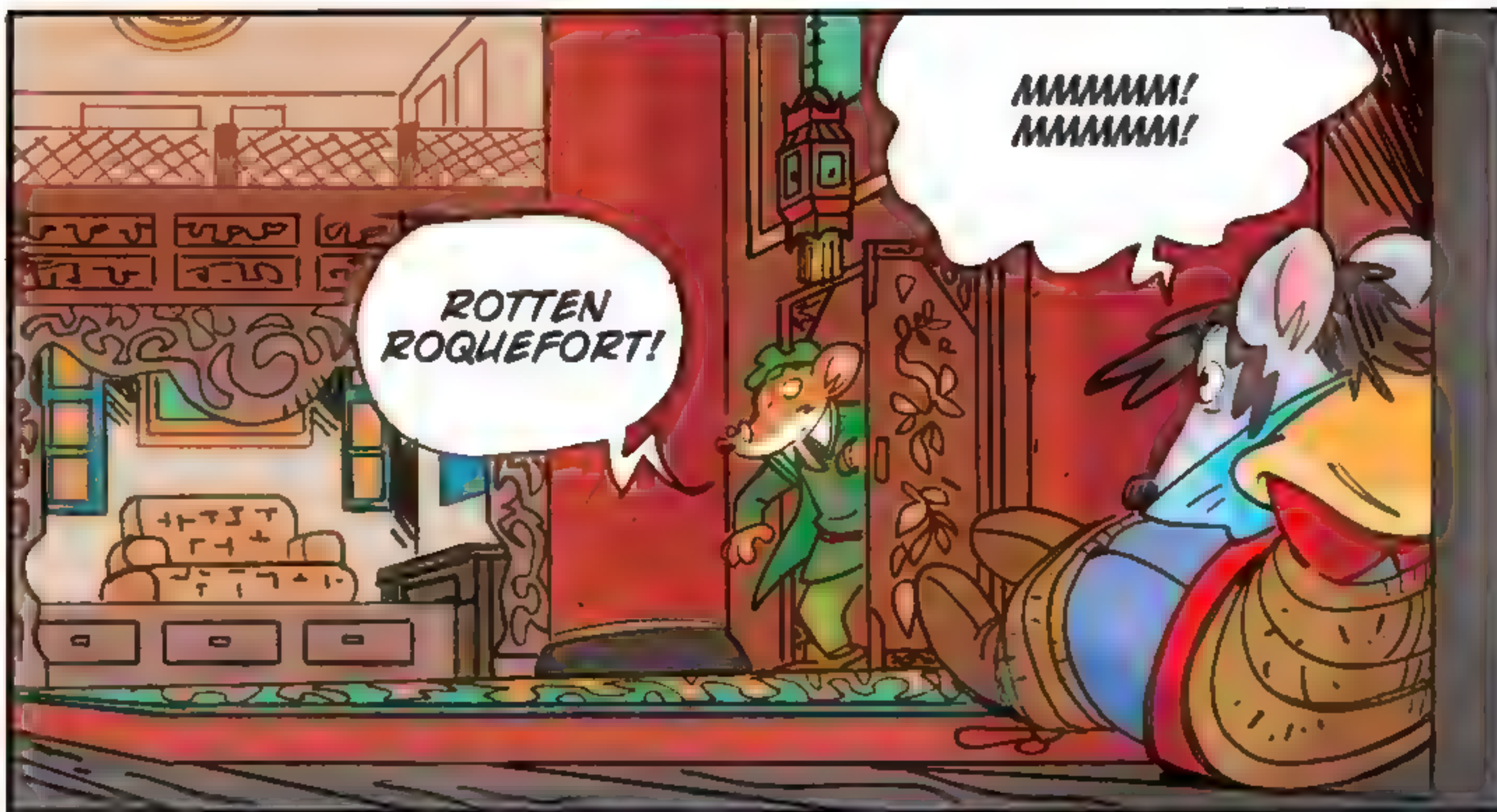
THE NEXT DAY AT DAWN,
MY FRIENDS AND I
ARRIVED AT QUINSAI...



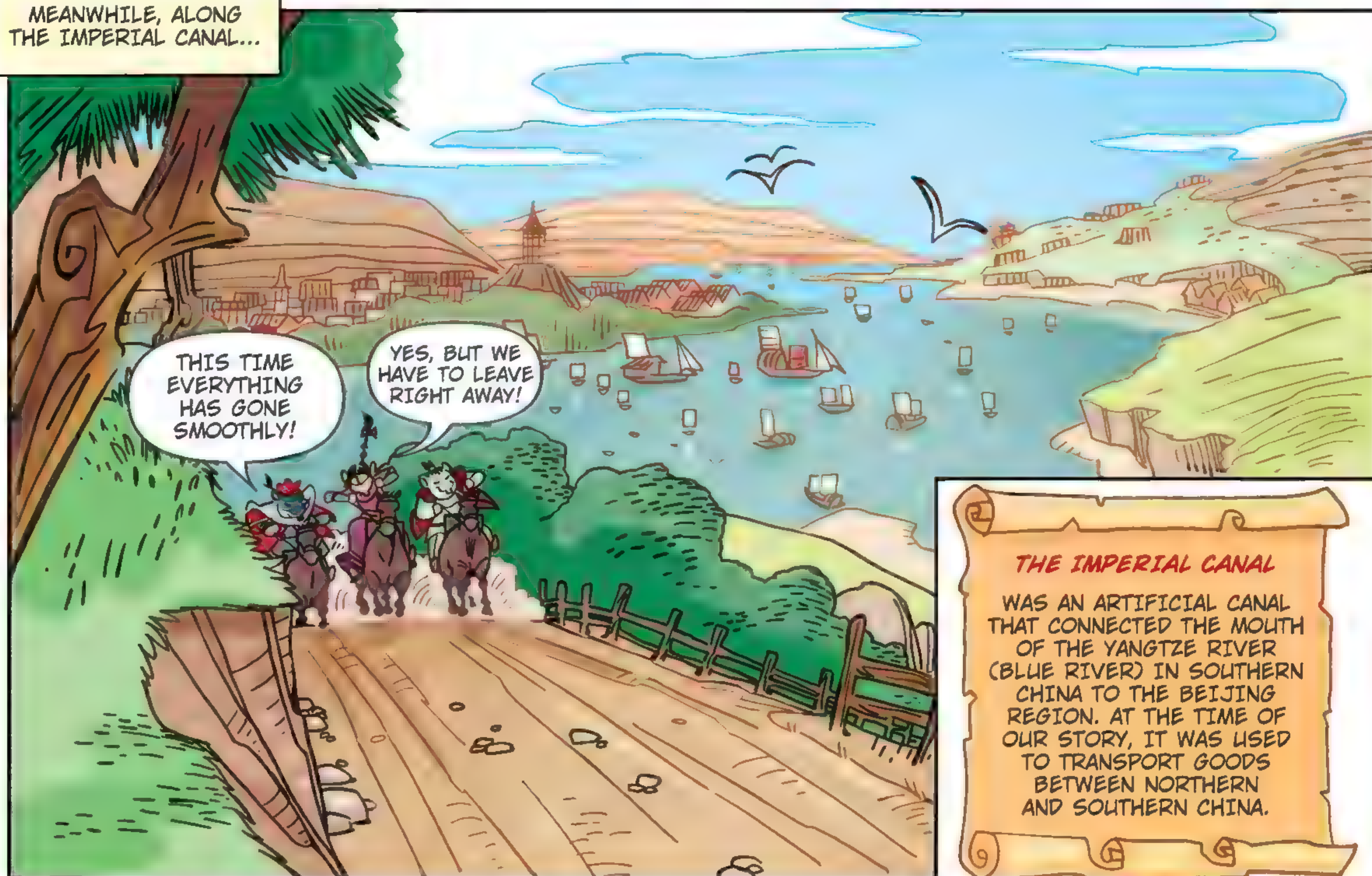






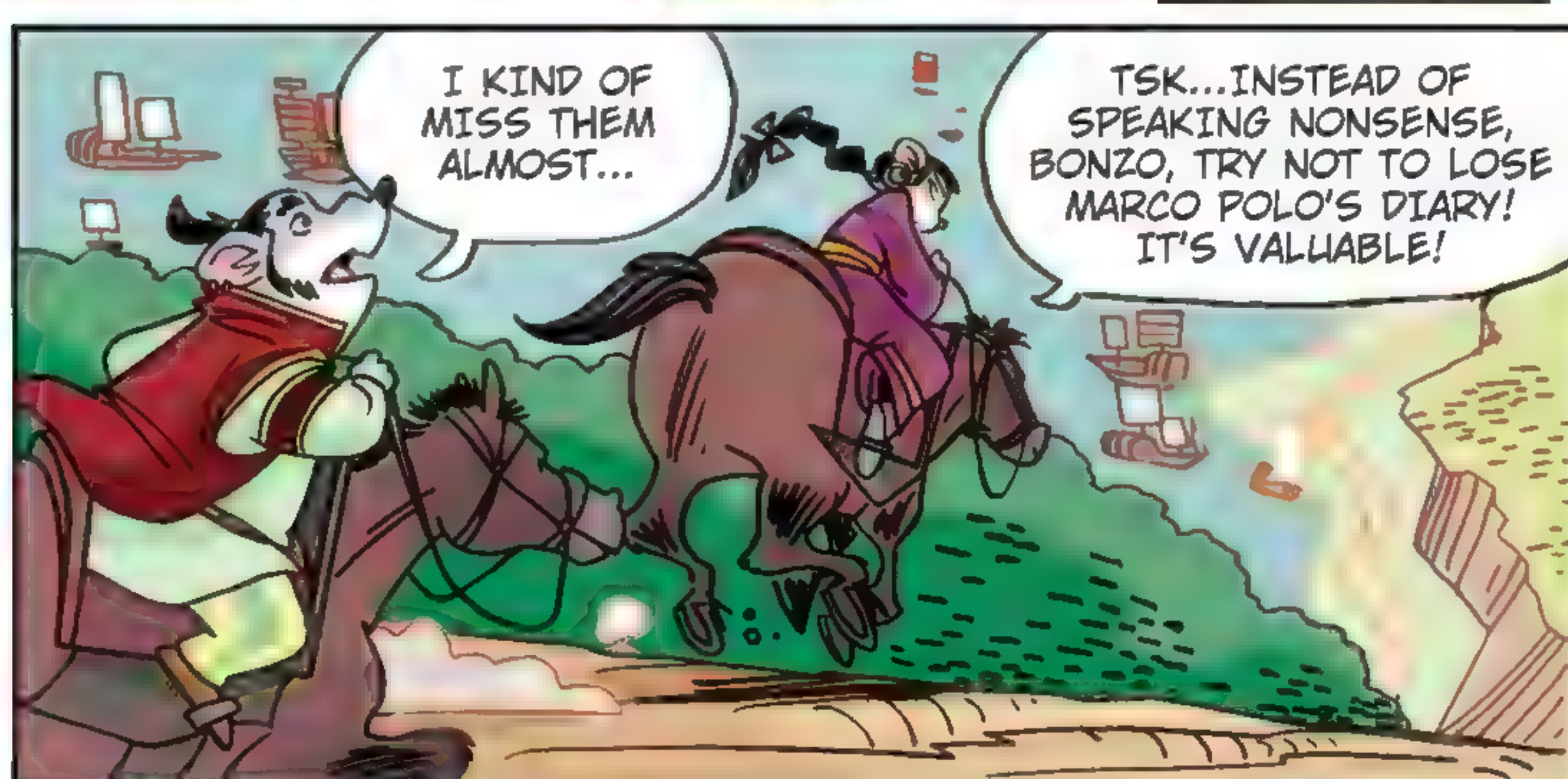


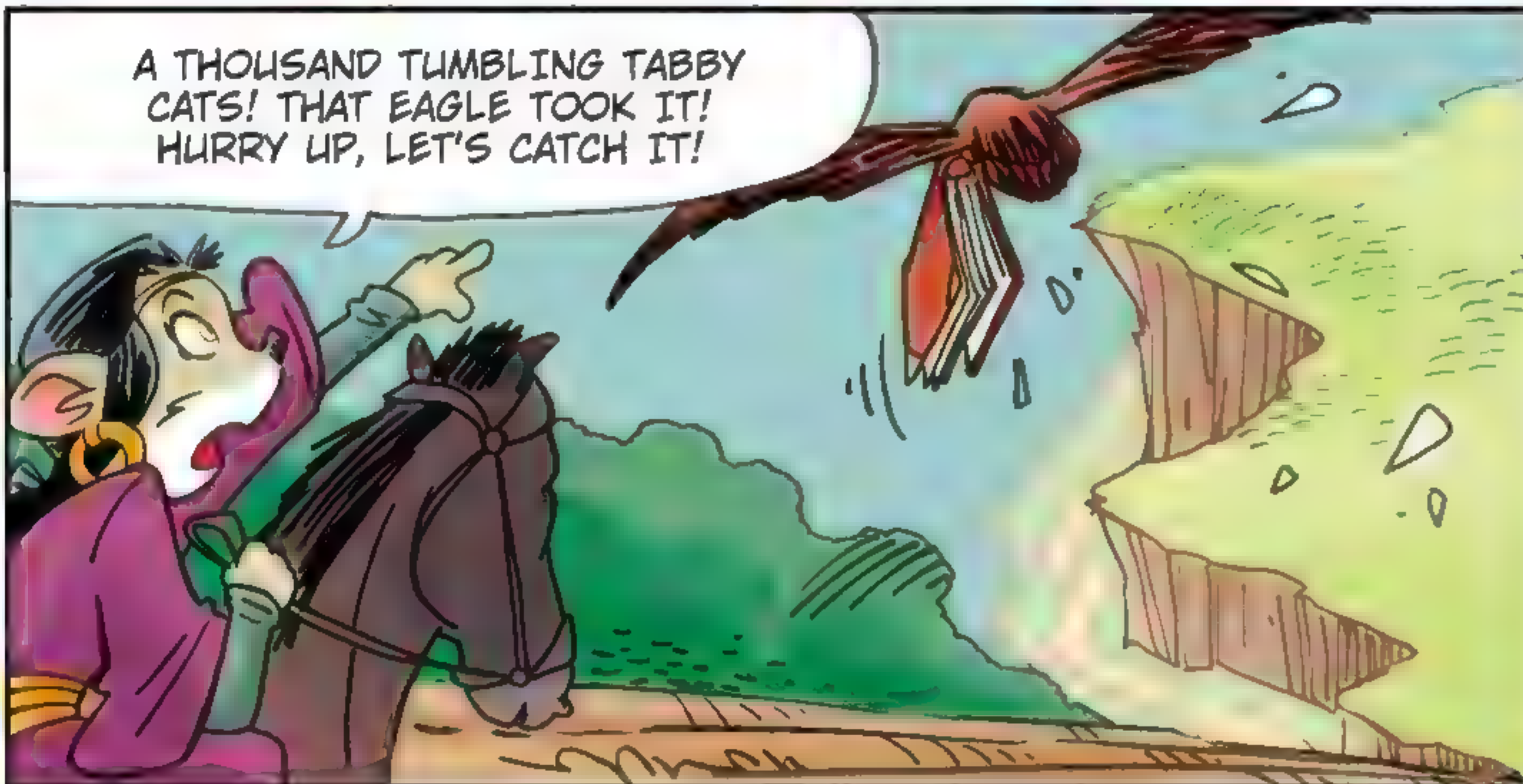
MEANWHILE, ALONG
THE IMPERIAL CANAL...

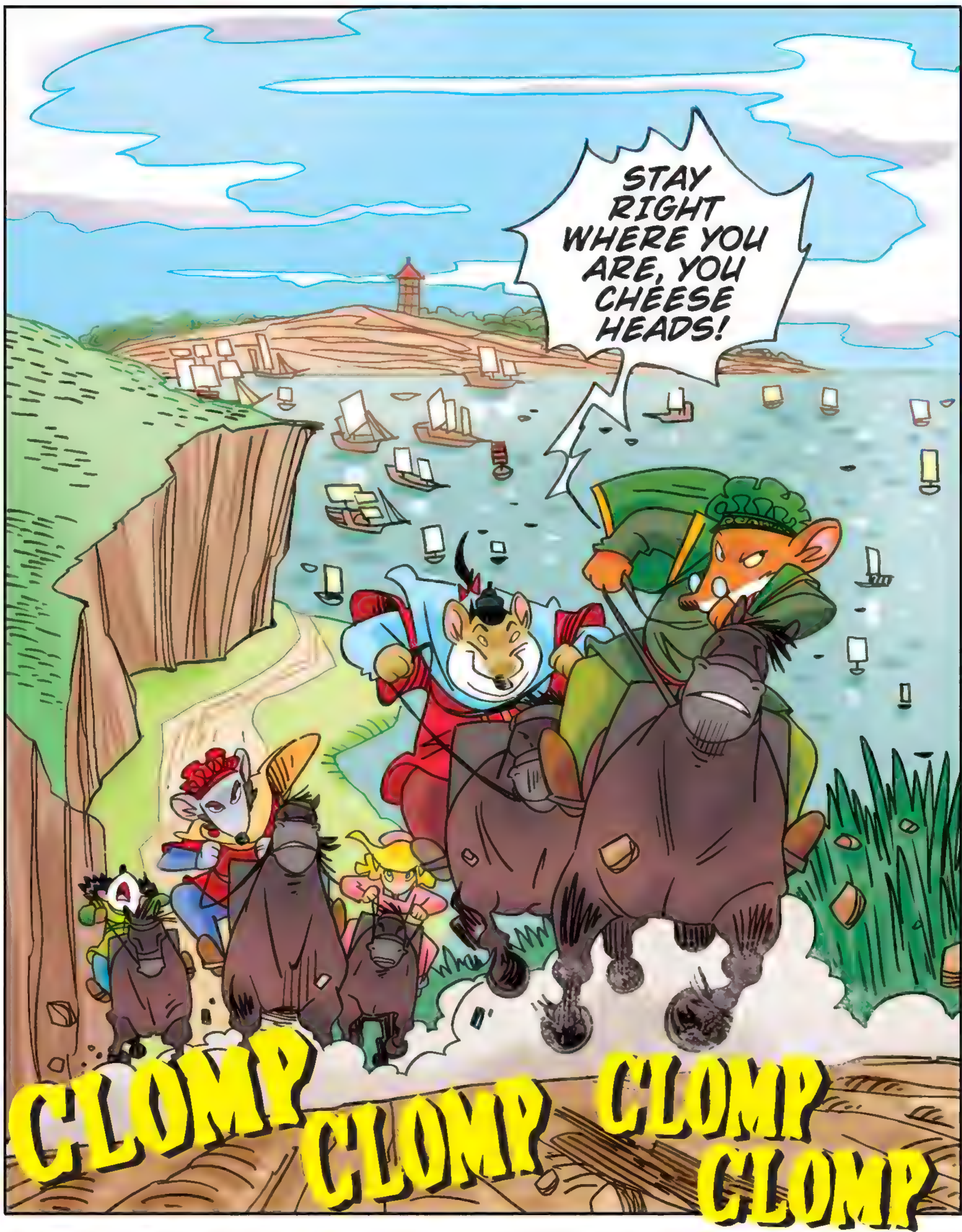


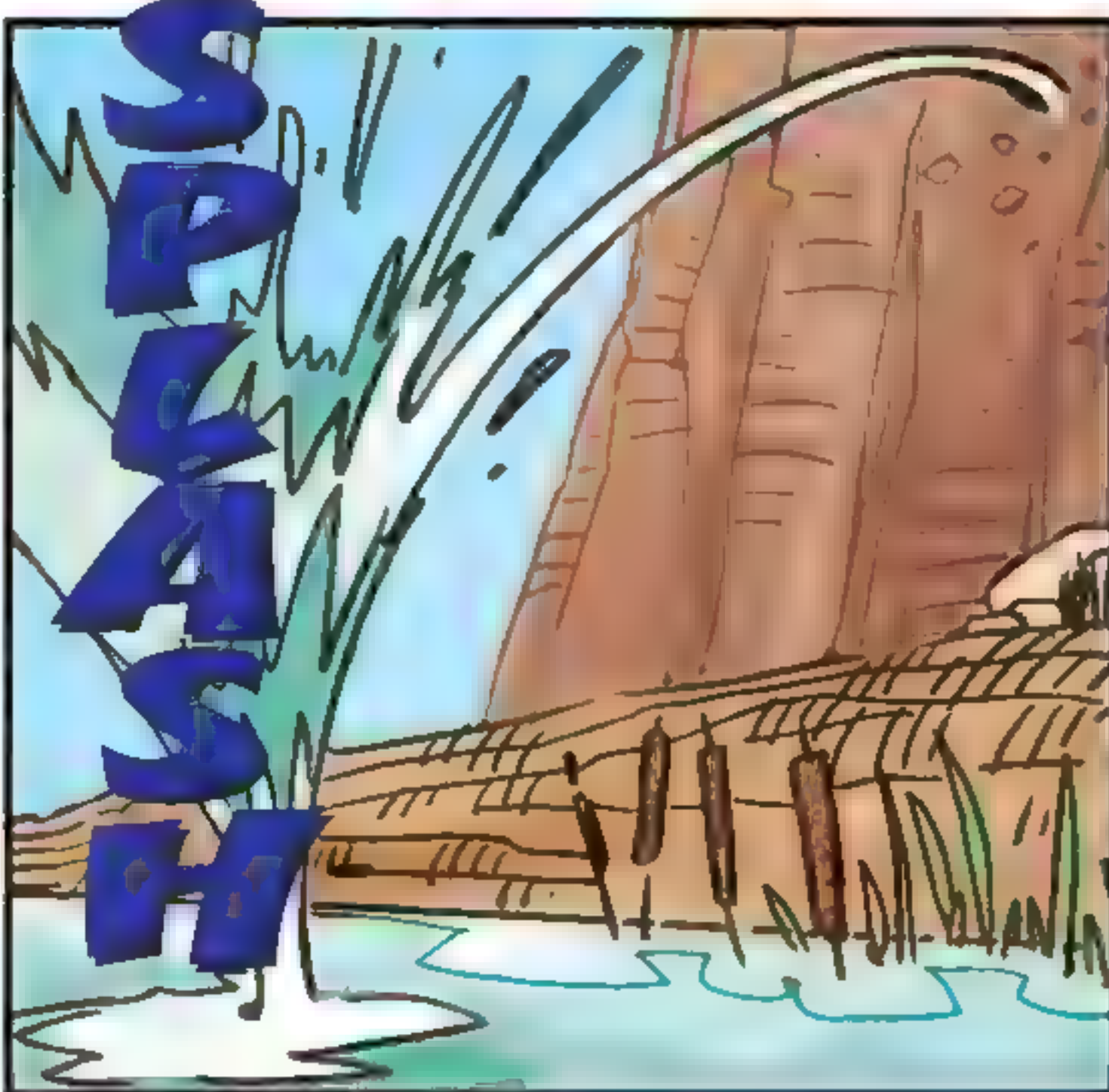
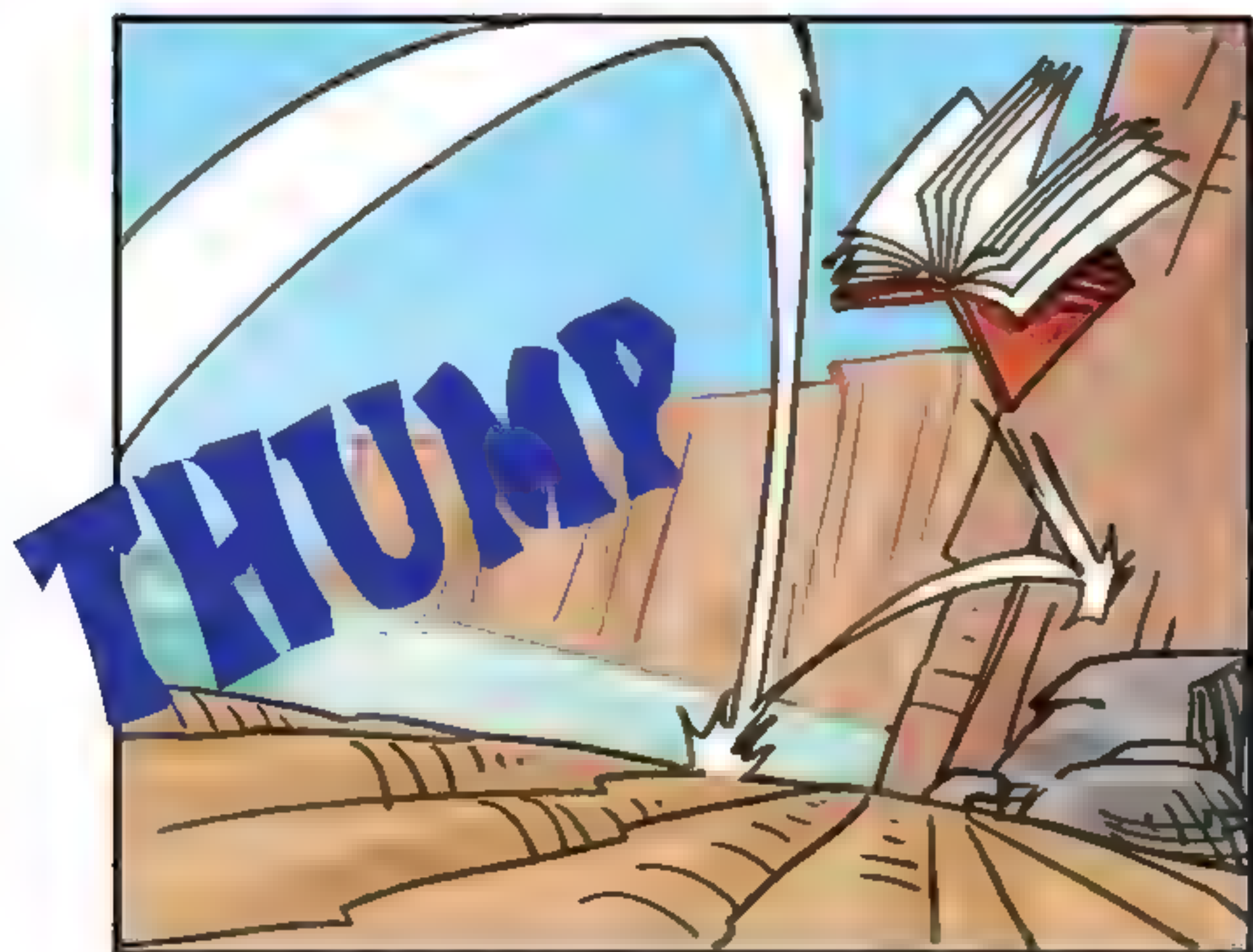
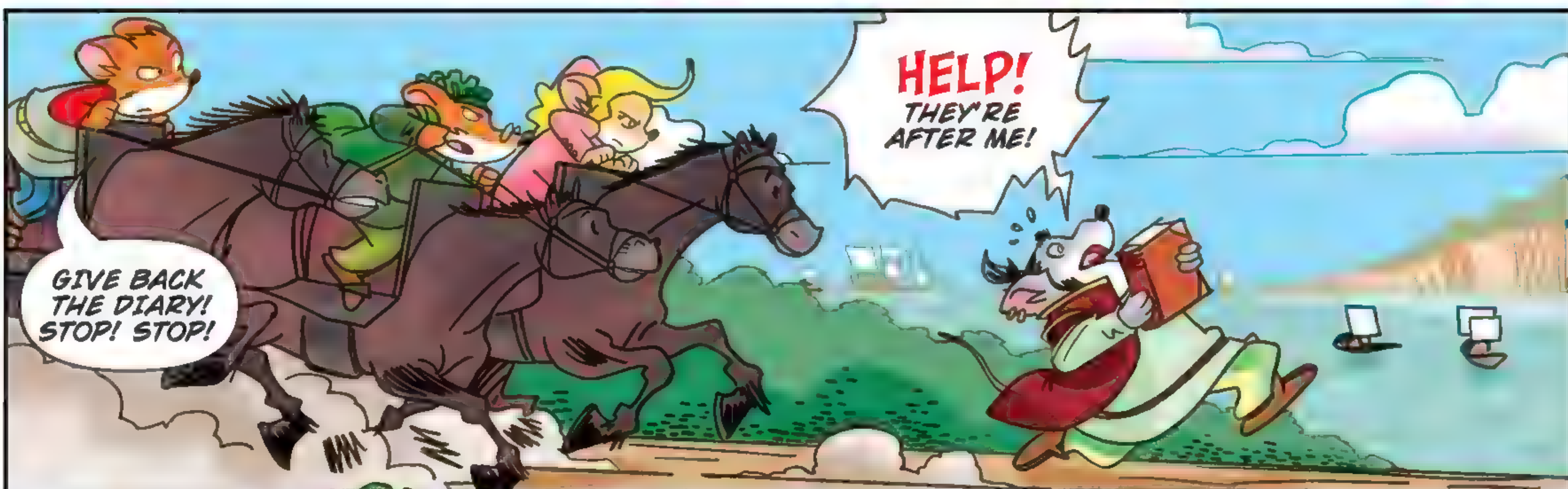
THE IMPERIAL CANAL

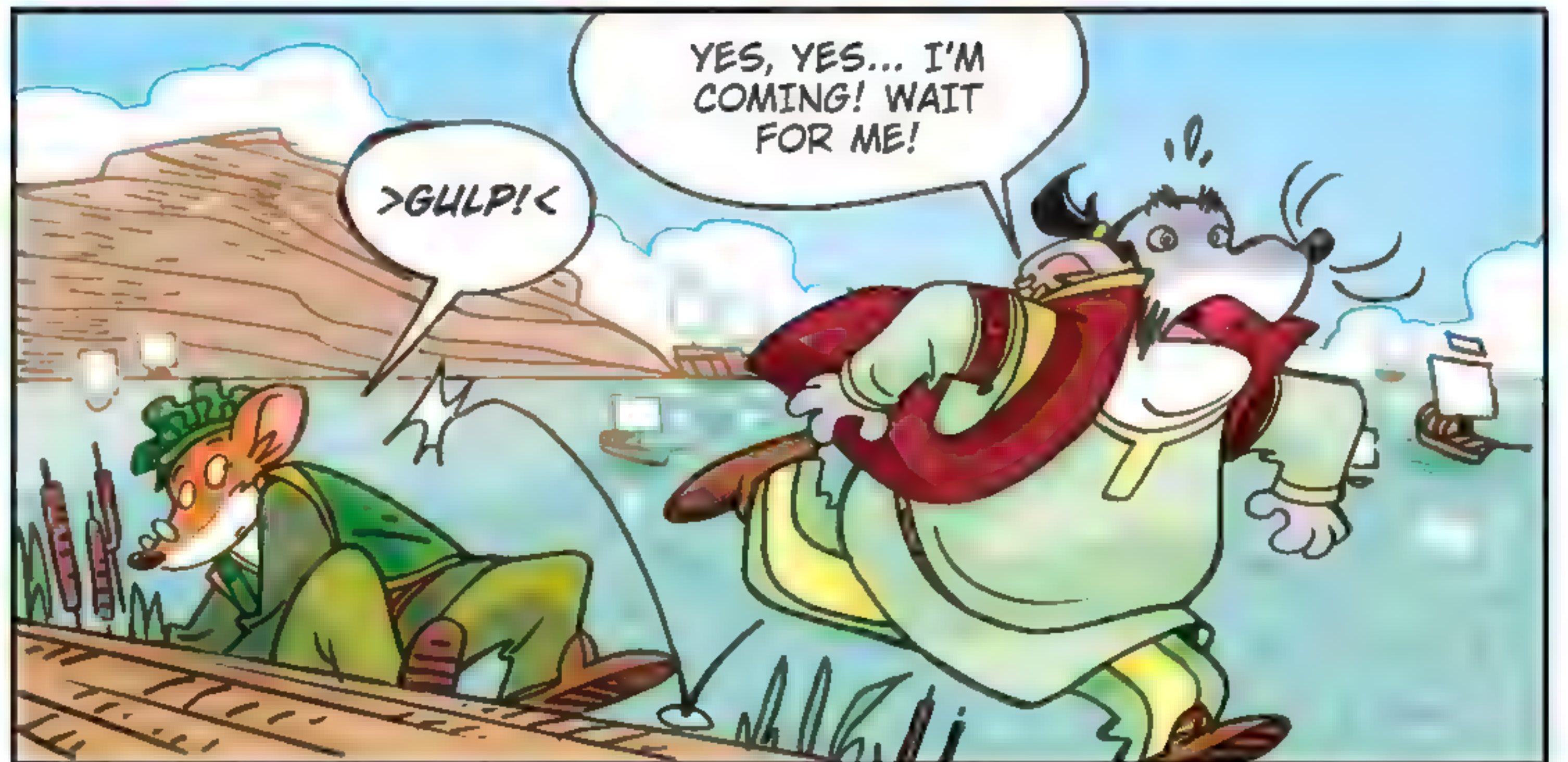
WAS AN ARTIFICIAL CANAL THAT CONNECTED THE MOUTH OF THE YANGTZE RIVER (BLUE RIVER) IN SOUTHERN CHINA TO THE BEIJING REGION. AT THE TIME OF OUR STORY, IT WAS USED TO TRANSPORT GOODS BETWEEN NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN CHINA.

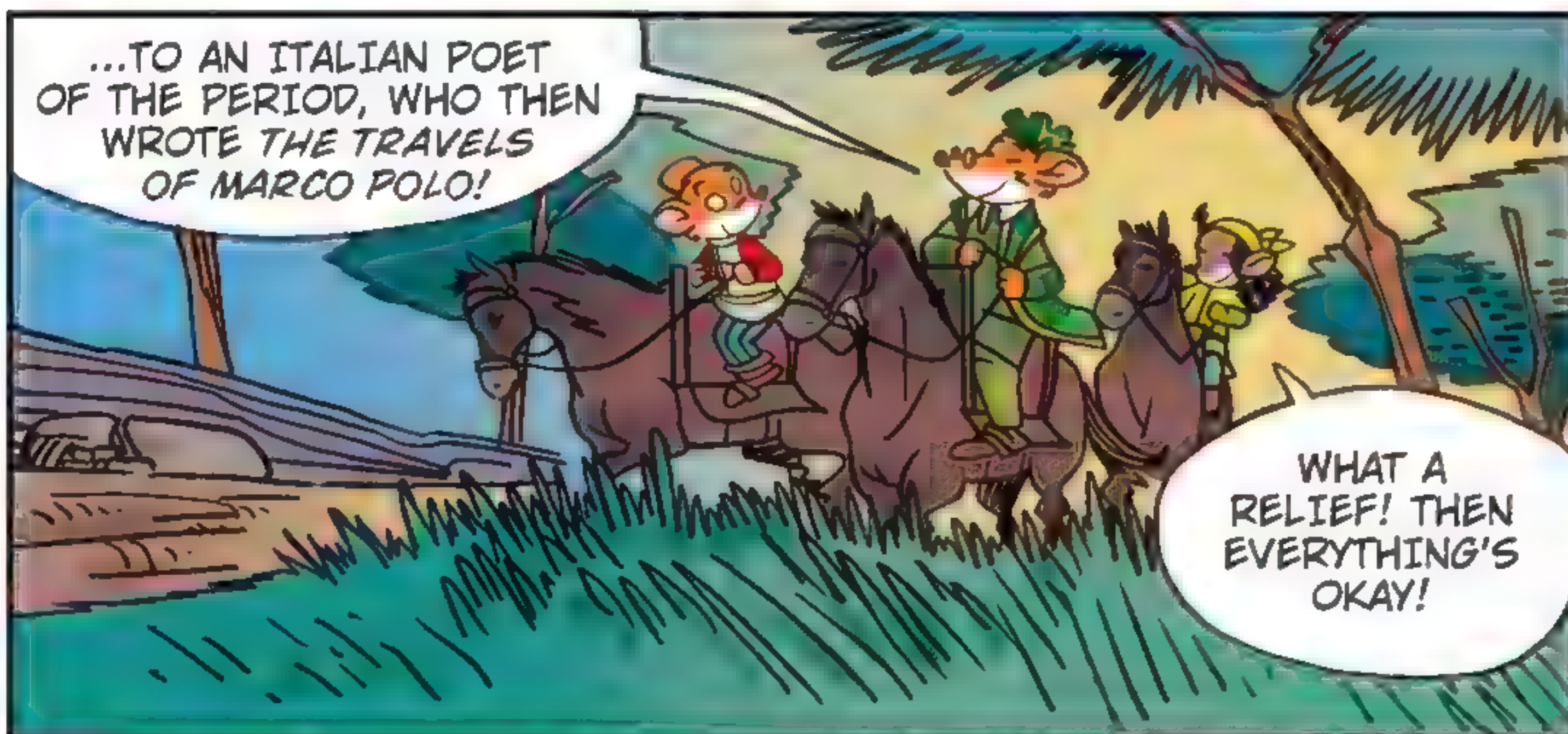
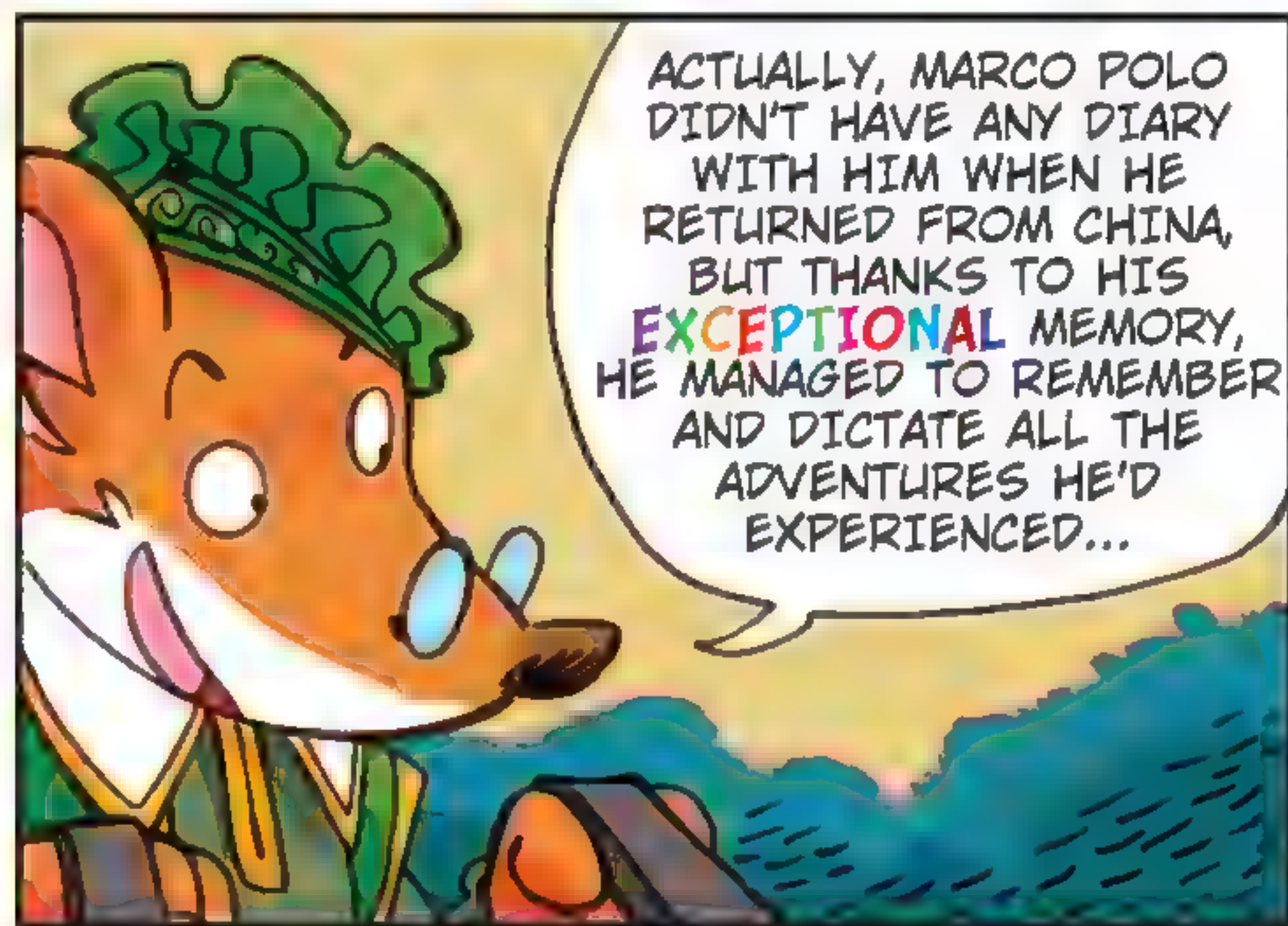
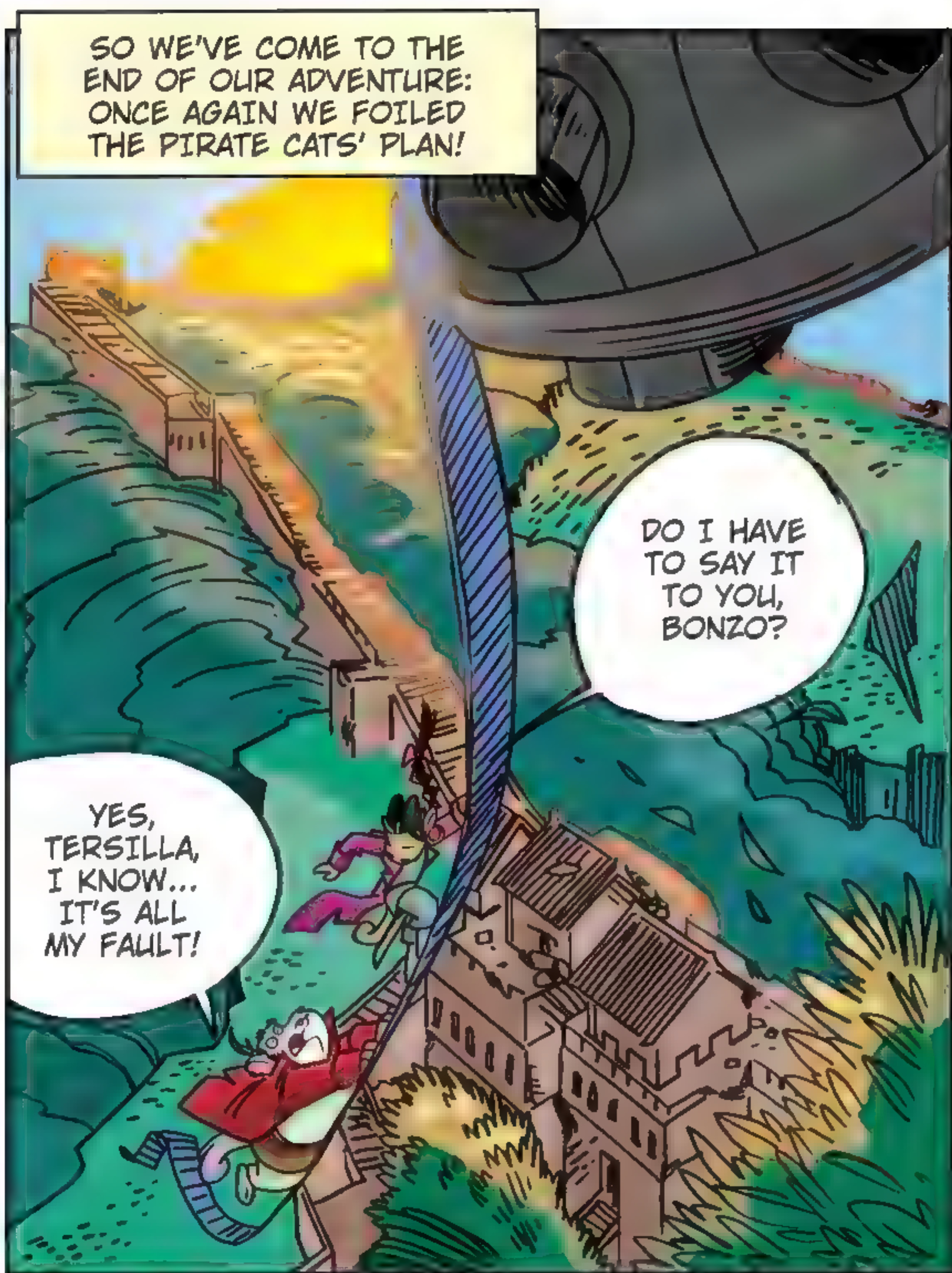




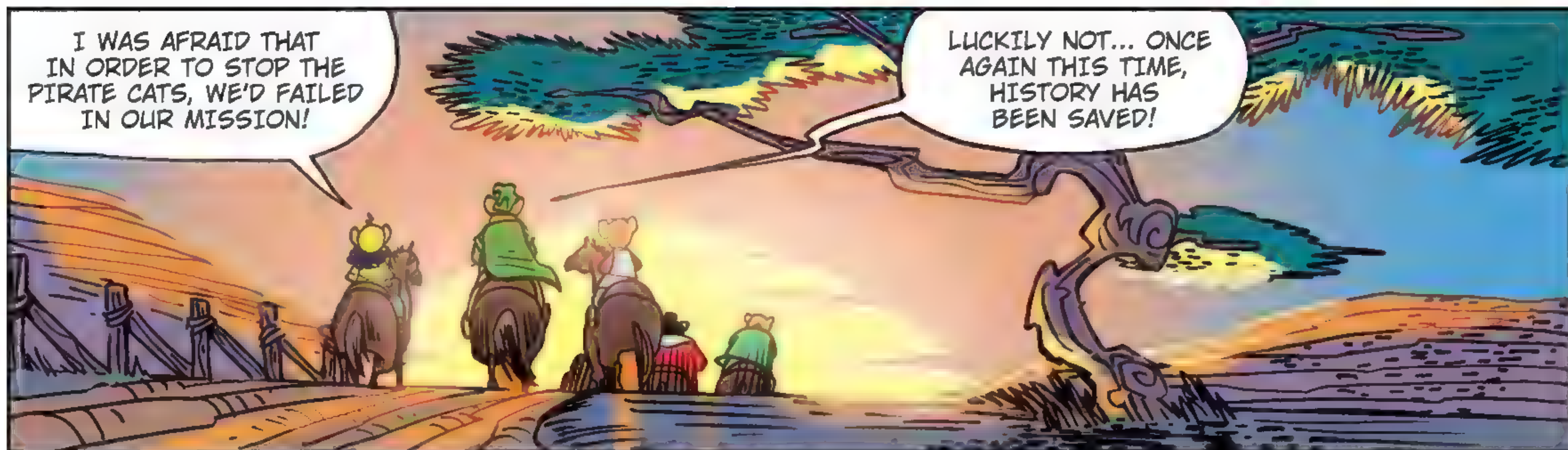








THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO WAS WRITTEN IN 1298, WHILE MARCO WAS A PRISONER OF THE CITY OF GENOA. IT WAS NOT MARCO WHO WROTE THE BOOK, BUT ONE OF HIS FELLOW CELL MATES, RUSTICELLO DA PISA, WHO MARCO TOLD ABOUT HIS ADVENTURES. IN 1299, MARCO WAS SET FREE AND RETURNED TO VENICE; THE BOOK WAS PUBLISHED IN OLD FRENCH. LATER ON, IT WAS CALLED IL MILIONE, PERHAPS DUE TO THE NAME "EMILIONE," IN REMEMBRANCE OF AN ANCESTOR IN THE POLO FAMILY WHO WAS CALLED THAT.

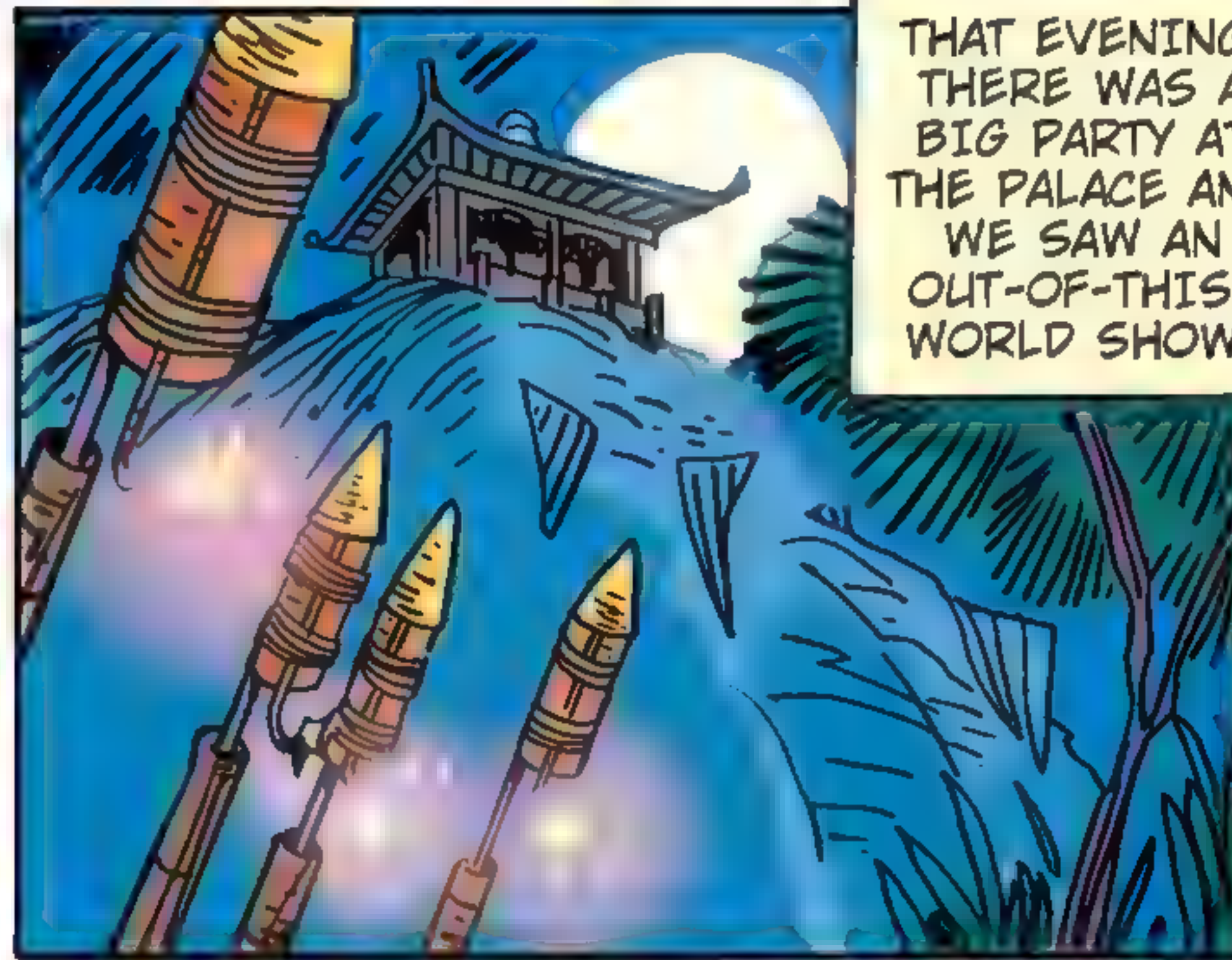


I WAS AFRAID THAT IN ORDER TO STOP THE PIRATE CATS, WE'D FAILED IN OUR MISSION!

LUCKILY NOT... ONCE AGAIN THIS TIME, HISTORY HAS BEEN SAVED!



UPON RETURNING TO KHANBALIK, MARCO TOLD THE GREAT KHAN EVERYTHING, AND WE WERE GREETED AS HEROES!



THAT EVENING, THERE WAS A BIG PARTY AT THE PALACE AND WE SAW AN OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD SHOW!



THESE FIREWORKS ARE RAT-TASTIC!

HOW BEAUTIFUL! I DIDN'T KNOW THEY'D ALREADY BEEN INVENTED IN THIS PERIOD!

FIREWORKS

DURING THE TIME OF MARCO POLO, THE CHINESE AND THE MONGOLIANS ALREADY KNEW ABOUT GUN POWDER AND USED IT TO MAKE SPLENDID FIREWORKS. THEY WERE SET OFF FOR MAJOR HOLIDAYS OF THE COURT OF THE GREAT KHAN AND TO CELEBRATE IMPORTANT VICTORIES.

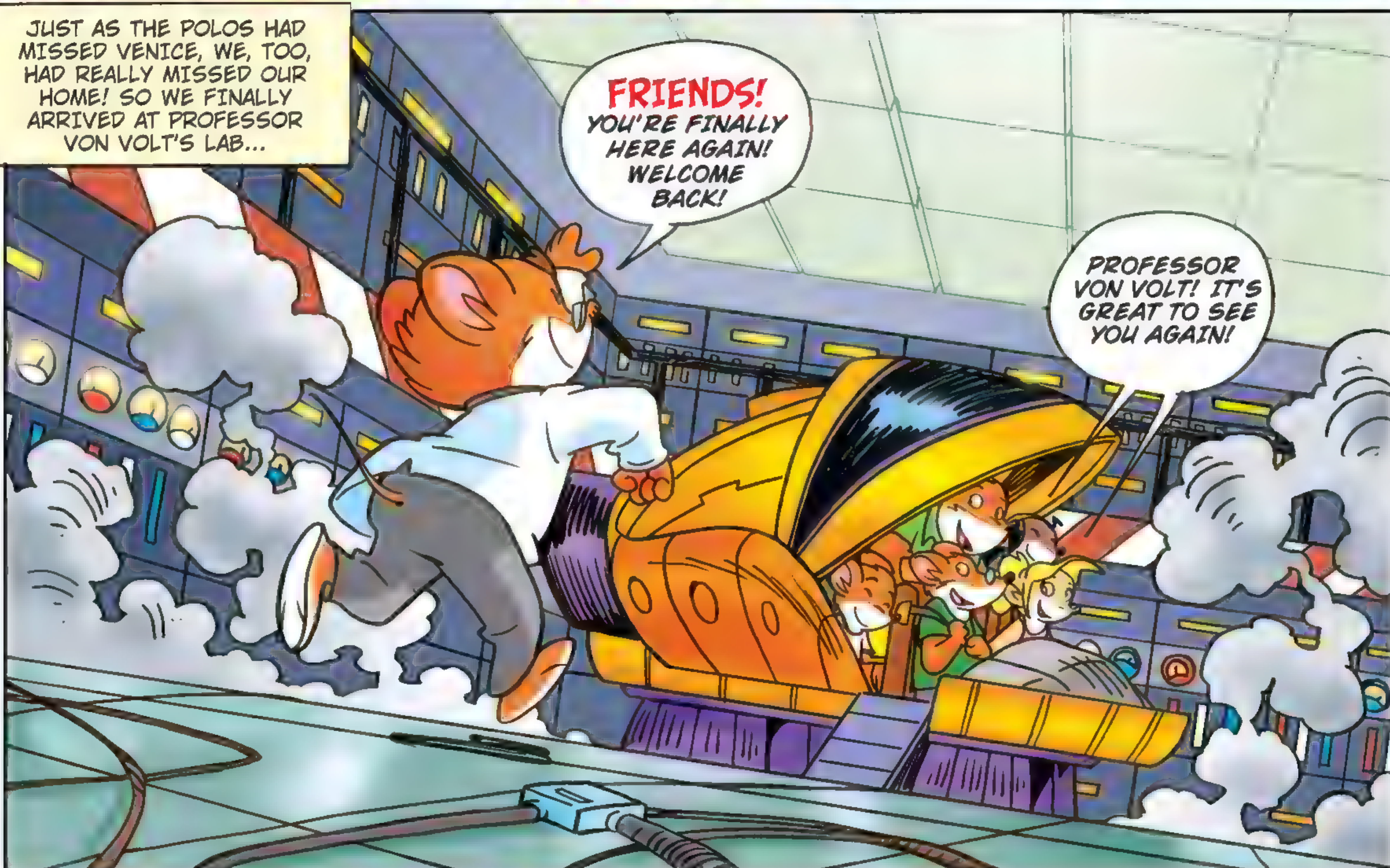
THE NEXT DAY, WE SAID
GOODBYE TO OUR FRIENDS AND
RETURNED TO THE SPEEDRAT!



JUST AS THE POLOS HAD
MISSED VENICE, WE, TOO,
HAD REALLY MISSED OUR
HOME! SO WE FINALLY
ARRIVED AT PROFESSOR
VON VOLT'S LAB...

FRIENDS!
YOU'RE FINALLY
HERE AGAIN!
WELCOME
BACK!

PROFESSOR
VON VOLT! IT'S
GREAT TO SEE
YOU AGAIN!



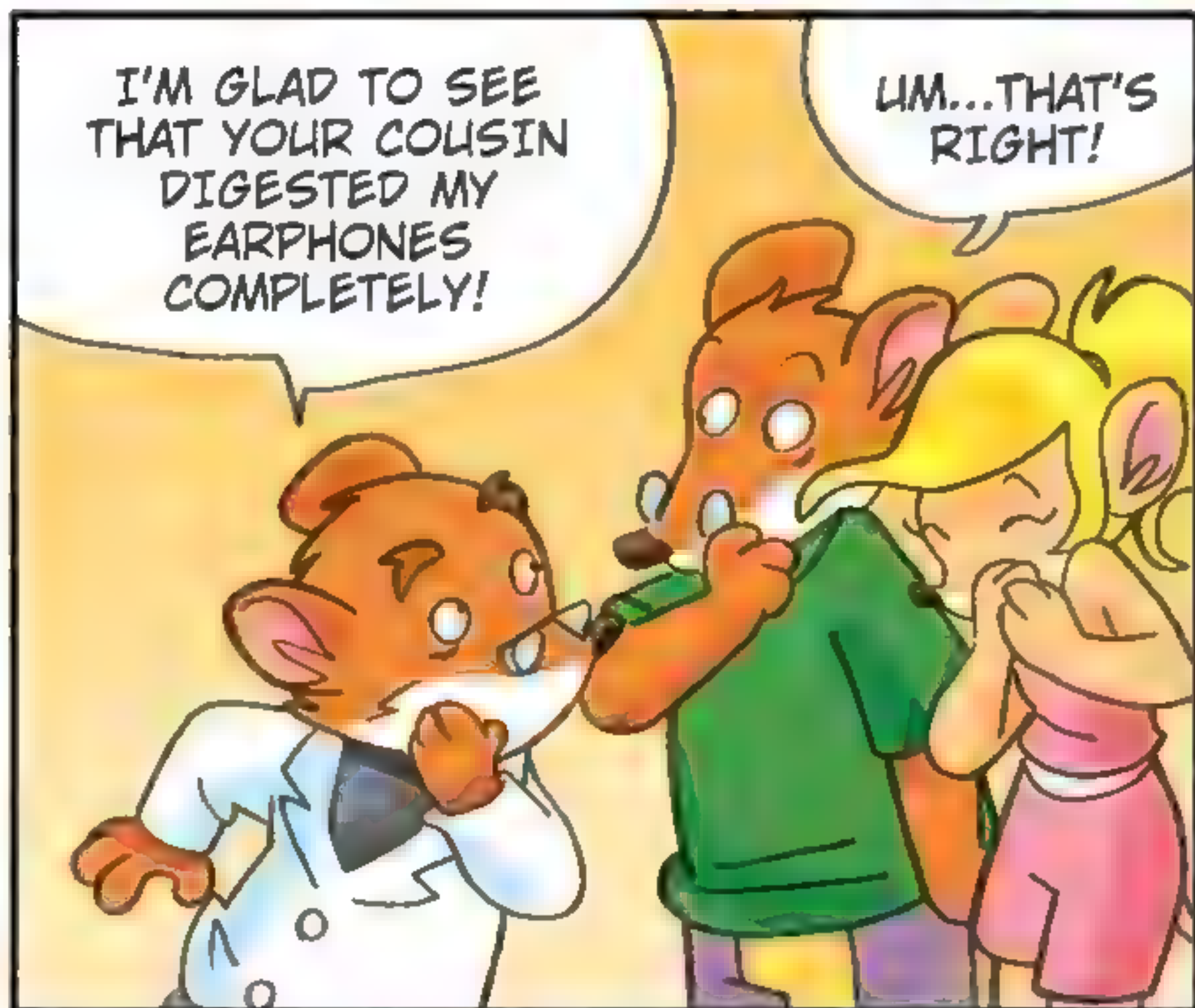
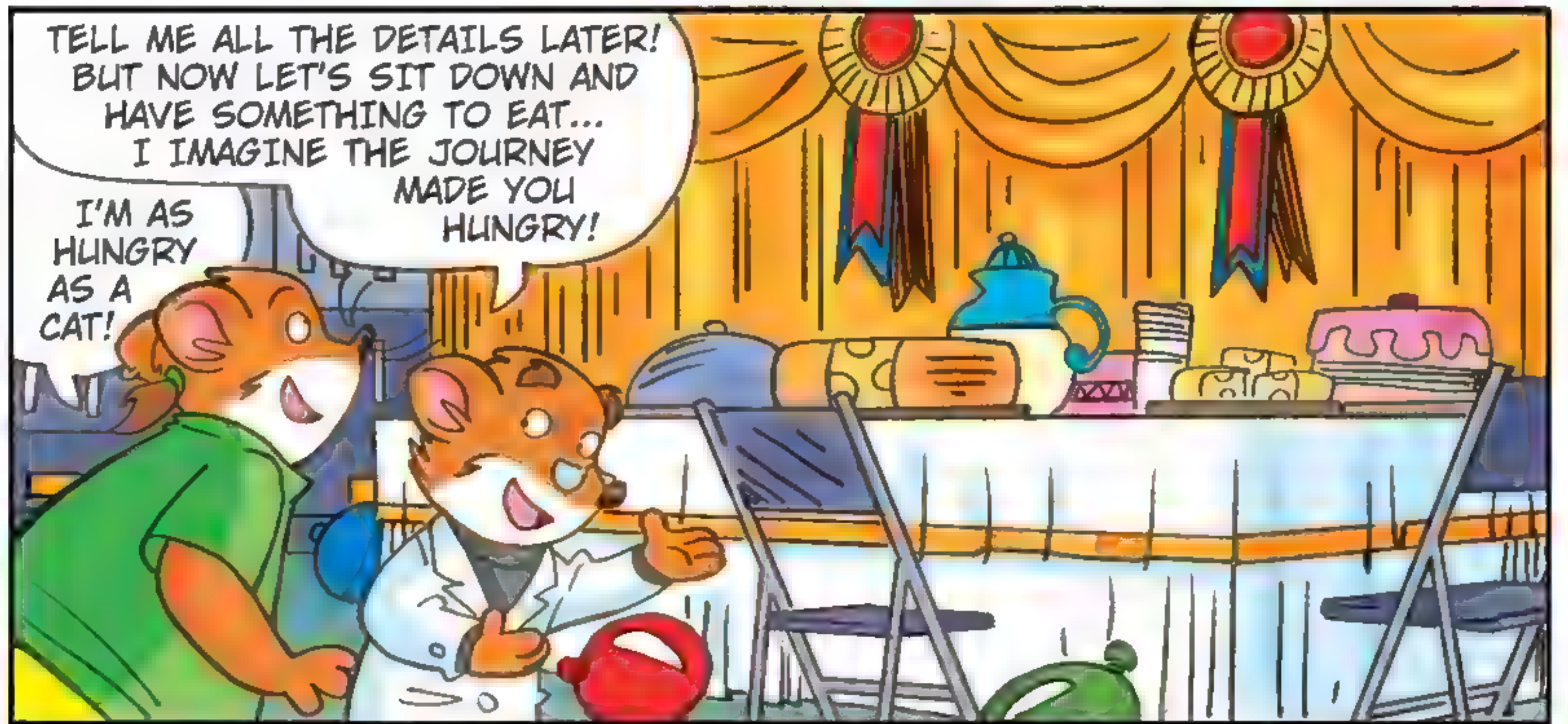
FROM YOUR
SMILES, I GATHER
THAT THE MISSION
WAS A SUCCESS,
RIGHT?

YES,
INDEED...



THE PIRATE CATS
WANTED TO STEAL
MARCO POLO'S DIARY
AND PUBLISH IT IN
HIS PLACE, BUT WE
MANAGED TO
FOIL THEIR
TREACHEROUS
PLAN!







Watch Out For PAPERCUTZ

Welcome to the fantastic, Far East-filled, fourth GERONIMO STILTON graphic novel from Papercutz, the folks dedicated to publishing great graphic novels for all ages. You may wonder how did little ol' Papercutz wind up publishing the exciting adventures of such a world-famous journalist? Well, it all began during a meeting in Manhattan, in the palatial Papercutz offices, during a meeting with my publishing partner Terry Nantier and we were talking about what would be a sensational addition to our stellar line-up—Excuse me, I forgot to introduce myself. My name is Salicrup, *Jim Salicrup*, and I'm the Editor-in-Chief at Papercutz. Terry mentioned that he had seen samples of the Italian GERONIMO STILTON graphic novels on one of his business trips overseas, and suggested that Papercutz publish these graphic novels in English. Since Terry knows more about graphic novels than anyone else I know—he's a true pioneer in the field and is responsible for bringing much of Europe's finest comics to an appreciative American audience—I simply nodded in agreement and the rest is history!

GERONIMO STILTON has become one of our most successful titles at Papercutz, and the reviews have been positively glowing! But it occurs to me that some GERONIMO STILTON fans may not be aware of the many other graphic novel series also published by Papercutz. When I mentioned that to Terry, he exclaimed "**MOLDY MOZZARELLA!** You better fix that with your next 'Watch Out for Papercutz' editorial—OR ELSE!" Well, when Terry squeaks, er, I mean speaks, I listen! So without further ado, here are just a few of the latest and greatest Papercutz graphic novels you may find irresistible...

If you love adventure, the LEGO® NINJAGO graphic novels pack in page-after-page of non-stop action! Each volume features all-new stories starring Cole, Zane, Jay, and Kai, the Masters of Spinjitzu, by Greg Farshtey, and artists such as Paulo Henrique, Paul Lee, and Jolyon Yates.

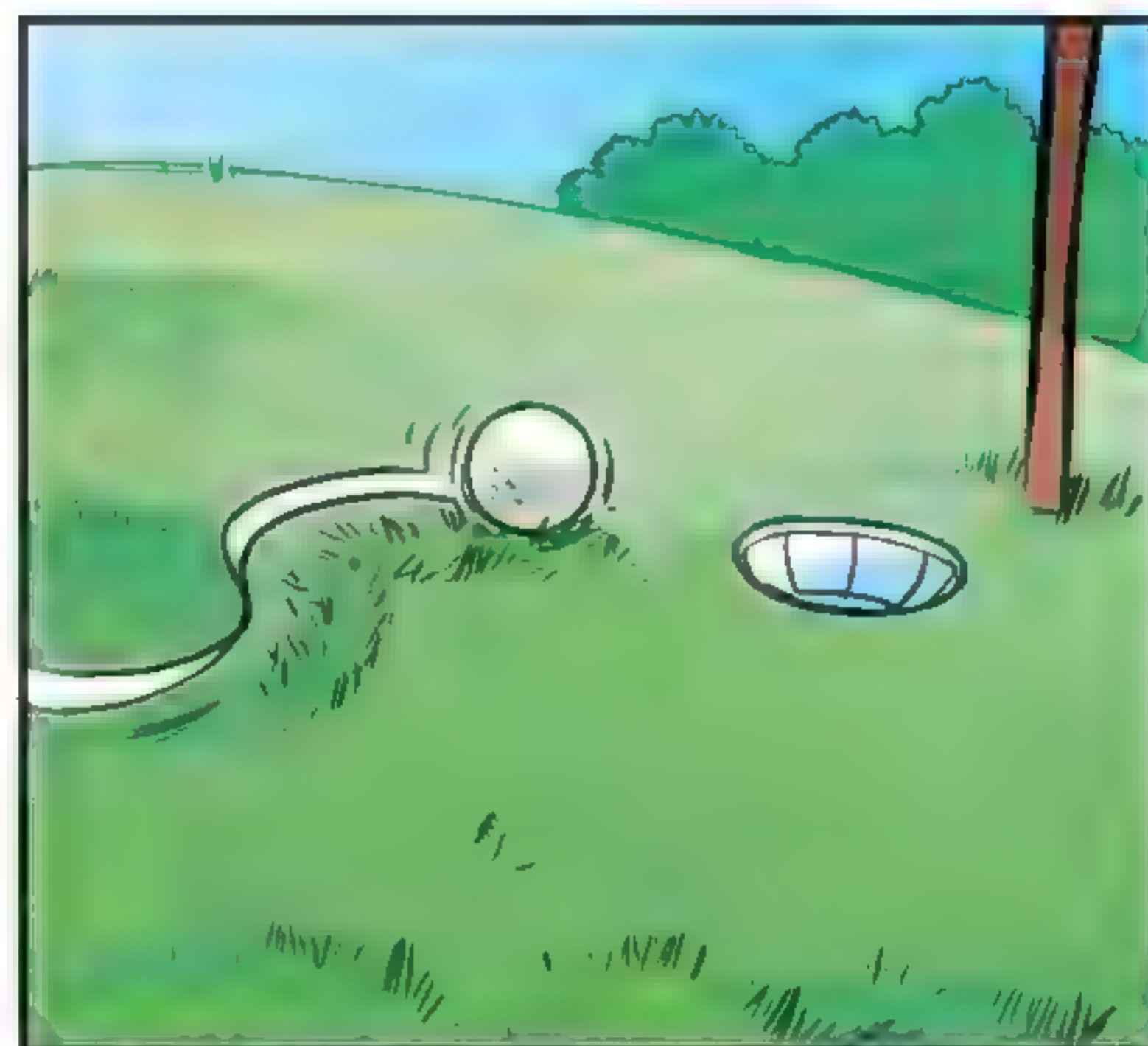
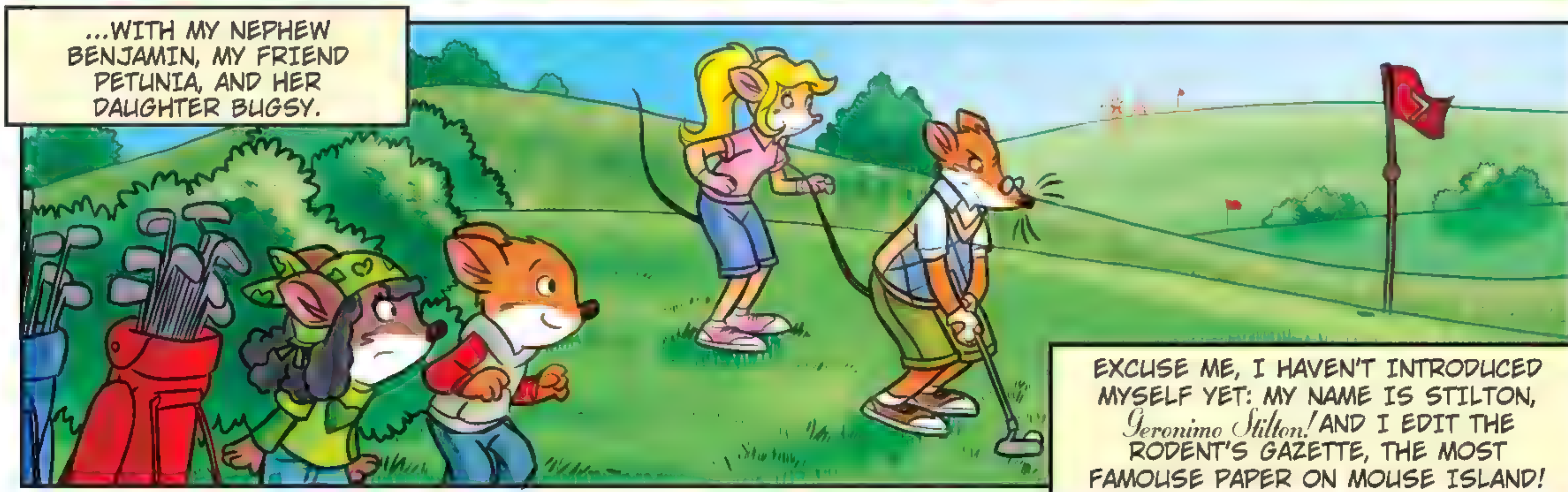
Equally action-packed is SABAN'S POWER RANGERS SUPER SAMURAI, starring the longest-running TV super-heroes The Red Ranger, The Pink Ranger, The Blue Ranger, The Green Ranger, The Yellow Ranger, and, of course, The Gold Ranger, in all-new adventures written by Stefan Petrucha, and illustrated by Paulo Henrique.

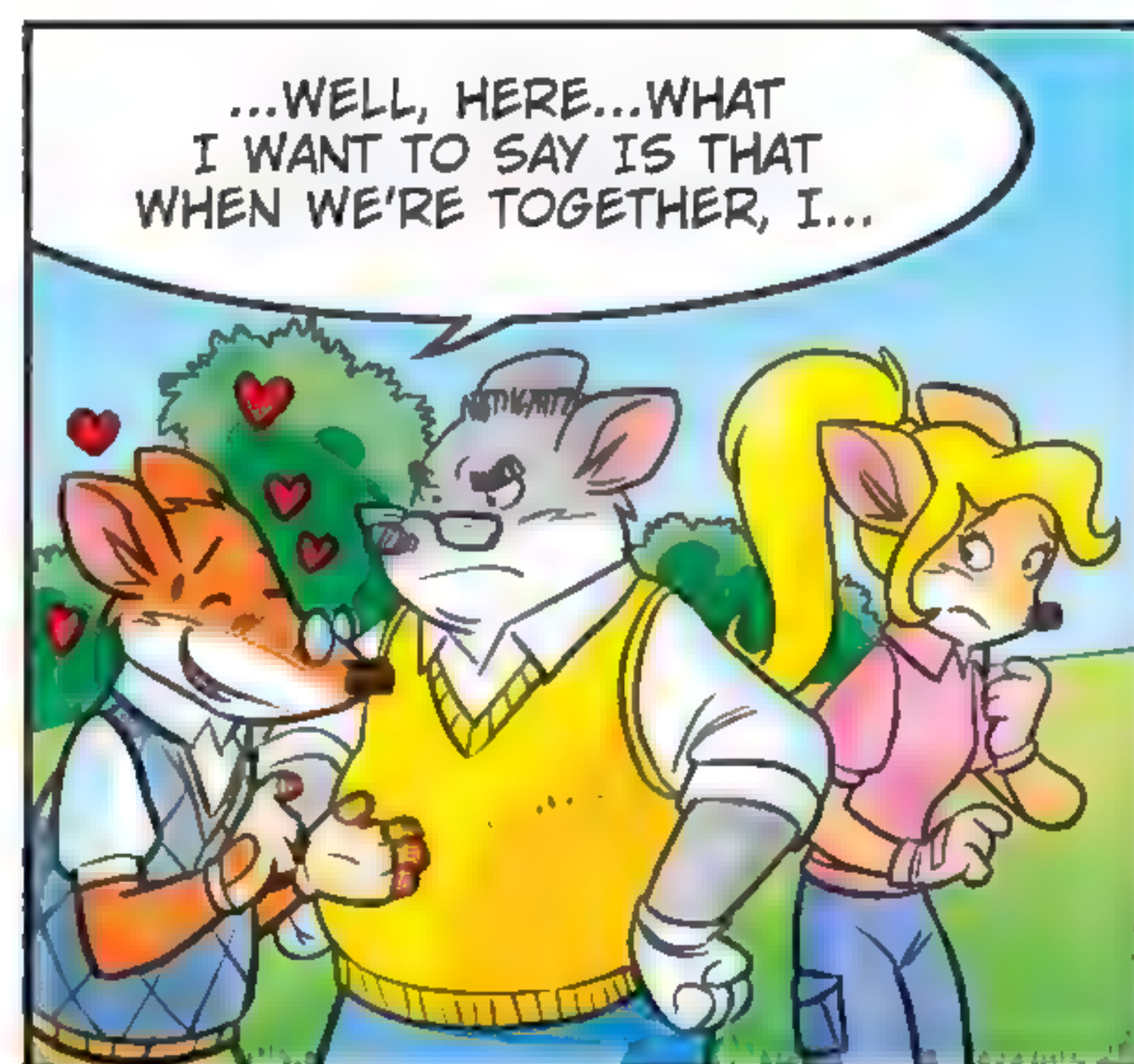
If silly slapstick is more your speed you'll love our all-new graphic novels starring THE THREE STOOGES, featuring screwball stories starring Moe, Larry, and Curly, by George Gladir and Stefan Petrucha, and drawn by award-winning cartoonist Stan Goldberg. There's also the crazy companion series, THE BEST OF THE THREE STOOGES COMICBOOKS featuring classic comics by Norman Maurer and Pete Alvarado.

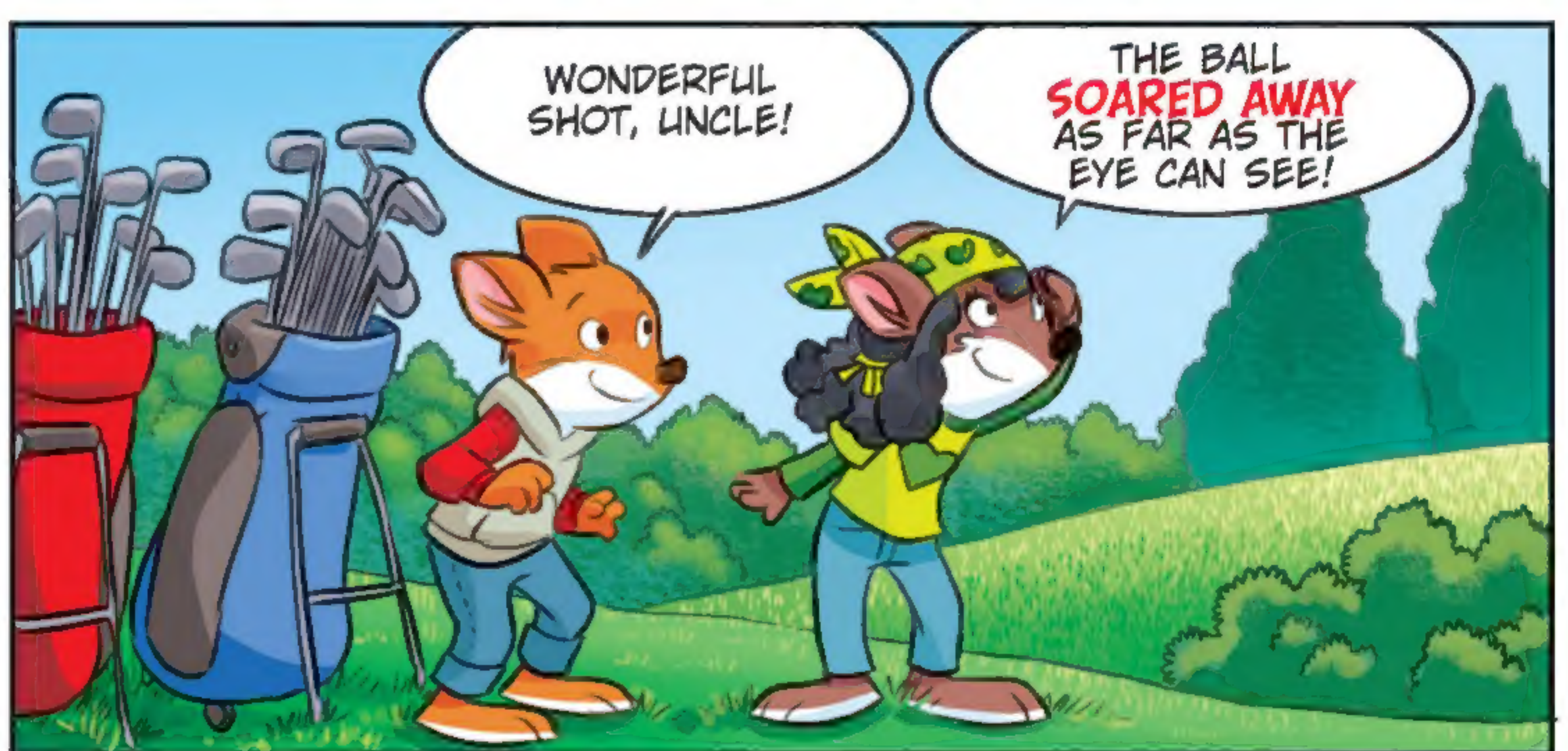
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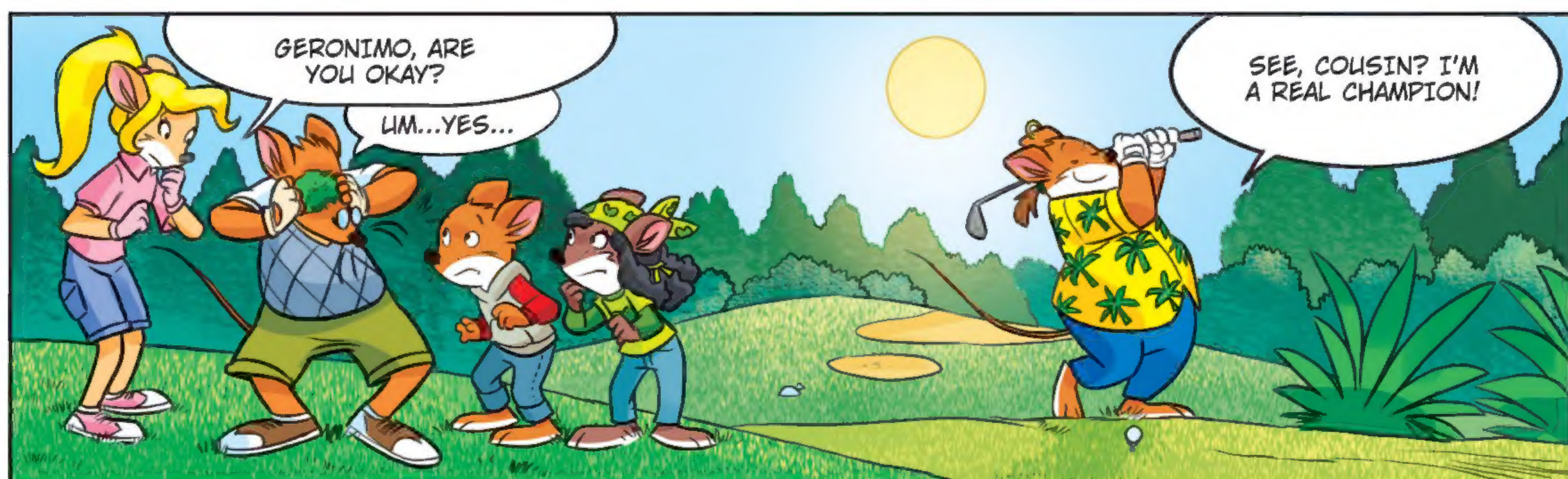
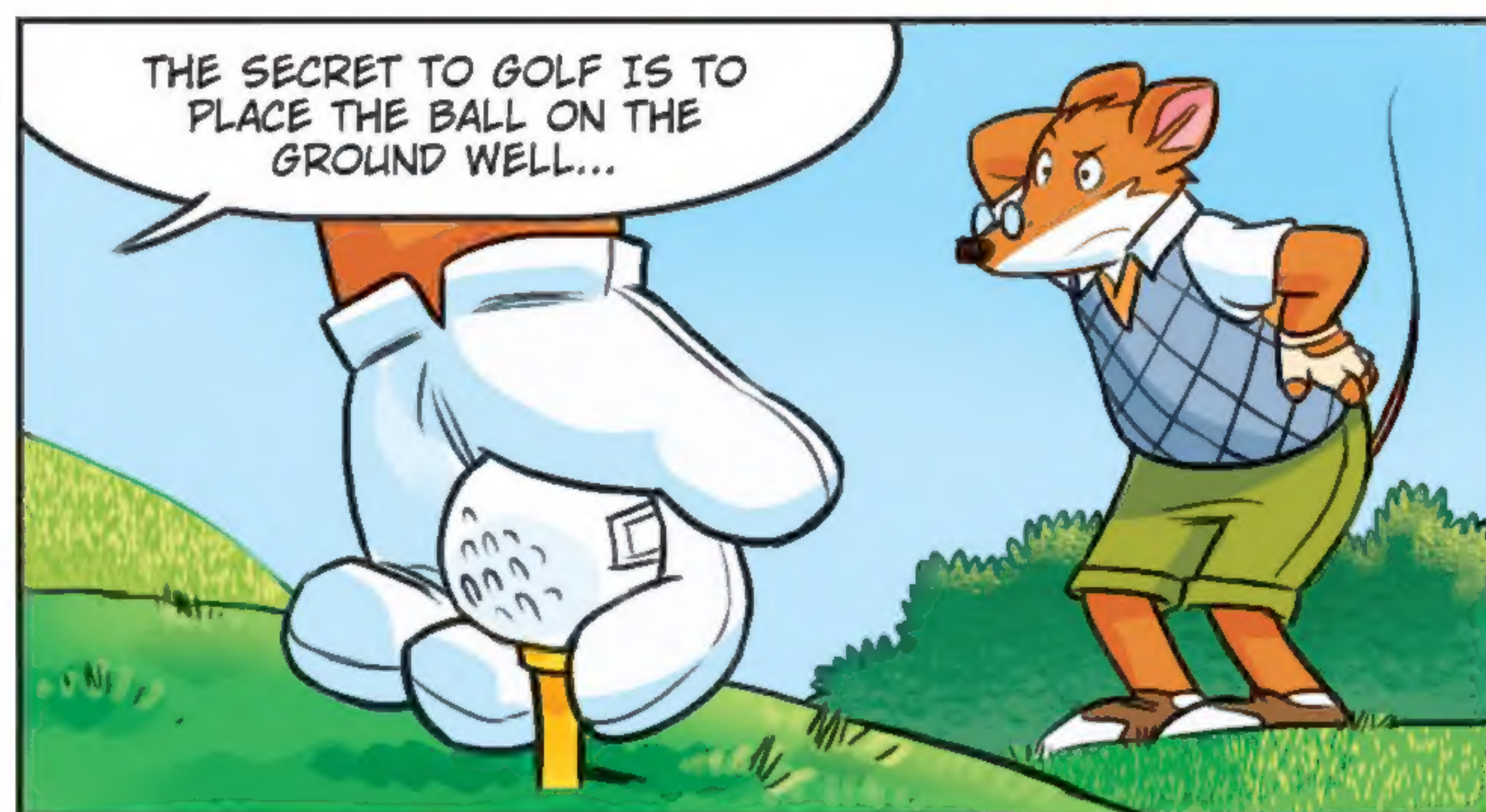
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